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Reform Party defends disciplining children

Fears of bureaucratic intrusion

Alan Doerksen

LANGLEY, B.C., OTTAWA, TORONTO — Members of the federal Reform Party spoke out recently defending the rights of parents and teachers to discipline children. Some Christian educators contacted by *Christian Courier* support Reform's efforts but are cautious about the use of corporal punishment in schools, and one Christian counsellor condemns any physical punishment of children by parents or teachers.

Reform Party members have circulated a petition that urges the House of Commons to protect Section 43 of the Criminal Code, which states: "Every school teacher, parent or persons standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances."

The petition states that: "removal of Section 43 would strengthen the role of bureaucrats — while weakening the role of parents — in determining what is 'in the best interest of children' and, therefore, would be a major and unjustified intrusion by the state into the realm of parental rights and responsibilities."

Signs of trouble?

Since 1994, the Reform Party has expressed concern that Section 43 is under review by the Department of Justice, something Justice Minister Allan Rock has confirmed. But Rock also told the House of Commons in May 1995: "The government has no intention to introduce any change to Section 43 of the Criminal Code."

Reform MP Sharon Hayes explains that although Section 43

See **DISCIPLINE** *page 2...*

BERT WITVOET

Whose task is it to discipline children?
(Grade One students in John Knox Christian School in Fruitland, Ont.)

Too early to cheer Guatemala's peace accord

COURTESY ICCHRLA

The people of Guatemala identify with furrows, sowing and harvest, but find themselves expelled from the land by an unjust system.

Robert VanderVennen (with files from ICCHRLA)

TORONTO — The world is celebrating the signing of a final peace accord by the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, bringing an end to 36 years of civil war.

But if peace does not end the causes for the war, the celebrations are out of place, says the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA). The peace accord does nothing to relieve the unjust misery in which most Guatemalans live, the cause of the revolution, says ICCHRLA.

A revolution can be started by people who want the ruling power that others have, or it can be started by people so desperate that no other means will serve. Guatemala is a nation in which 70 per cent of the farm land is owned by less then three per cent of the people. The national tax system is the worst in the hemisphere except for Haiti's, with most of the tax money coming from the poorest people.

Not much has changed

The people do not have adequate food, shelter, medical care and most children do not go to school. The people do not have an adequate sense of personal security. In short, they have lost the war, ICCHRLA believes.

The United Nations Verification Mission, which has studied the peace accord, says that the accord "was not sufficient to bring about substantial change in a situation characterized by grave human rights violations and persistent impunity."

Just days before it signed the peace accord, the Guatemalan Congress passed a law granting

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News

Discipline needs cautious use in schools

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is under review by the government, she doesn't expect changes to be made before the next election.

Last June, Svend Robinson, a member of the federal NDP caucus, introduced Bill C-305 which would have removed Section 43 from the Criminal Code. When introducing the bill, Robinson explained, "Condoning corporal punishment can lead to physical and psychological injury and even ultimately to the death of children. It contributes to violence in society.... It is a relic of a bygone age and has no place in a democratic society that respects and values children." That bill was defeated.

Defence of parents' rights

In contrast to Robinson's bill, Reform MP Garry Breitkreuz introduced a private member's motion last Nov. 8 which called for the rights of parents to be entrenched in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms so that they can pursue family life without undue interference from the state.

Hayes explains that this motion was "non-votable," and was simply debated in Parliament. Breitkreuz and Hayes have both been vocal in the House of Commons on the subject of the right of parents and teachers to discipline children. Recently, Hayes told the House of Commons: "I believe that parents and teachers should have legal protection to physically discipline children if they deem it necessary. A distinction has to be made between reasonable physical force in disciplining children and physical violence that constitutes abuse. In no way do I condone abuse against children."

COURTESY SHARON HAYES

Sharon Hayes

Asked what types of discipline are appropriate for parents to use on children, Hayes comments, "I'm not going to tell a parent how to discipline a child." She adds that the types of discipline used in schools should be "up to the schools and provinces to decide."

Dr. Joy McCullough, chair of the education department at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., believes that Section 43 should be protected, but gives qualified support to corporal punishment in schools.

"I understand concern people have as far as brutality and abuse," says McCullough. "I have seen in schools, even Christian schools, abuse of authority.... I used to think strapping a child is fine. I don't now."

During the 22 years she taught at Christian and public schools, McCullough used corporal punishment seven times.

For her, a teacher needs to have a relationship with a student for punishment to be effective. Punishment is an important means of correcting children and is "a healing opportunity to minister to a child,", she says. It's not the severity of punishment but the certainty of it that counts. "The deeper the relationship I have with a student the less severe the consequence needs to be."

Discipline is "a calling to soundness of mind," says McCullough. The results should be "not just outward conformity. It's an inner change of heart."

McCullough has not seen the Reform Party's petition about section 43 but says she would sign it. She doesn't think the section needs to be more specific about what types of punishment are permissible.

Parents need to have the right to discipline their children, says McCullough. Governments and courts should not take that authority away from parents.

But Ken Van Wyk, executive director of Christian Counselling Services in Toronto, thinks Section 43 is not reasonable. "I don't think it's needed, but if we keep it, it needs to be reworded," he says, because it's too vague.

Van Wyk sees the Reform Party as appealing to conservative Christians who follow the proverb: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." But Van Wyk sees the rod in biblical terms as something "used for protection and not discipline," as seen in Psalm 23, where the shepherd uses his rod to protect his sheep.

No corporal punishment

Van Wyk sees no place for corporal punishment in homes or schools. "I've only seen it used when a teacher is frustrated and wants to bully the student." Instead, teachers and parents should develop "conflict mediation skills."

"Language is much more effective than force," says Van Wyk. "The strap doesn't act as a deterrent."

As a marriage and family therapist, Van Wyk observes, "I deal with kids who are physically abused all the time. Families who are successful don't use force."

John Stronks, a professor of education at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., believes that the Reform Party "correctly addresses the God-given parental authority to nurture and discipline their children." But he adds that a clear distinction must be drawn between the authority of parents and others such as teachers.

Stronks also supports the government in its consideration of possible changes to Section 43 because he believes the government wants to curtail abuse.

Abuse never justified

As an instructor of future teachers, Stronks explains, "We advise our students [to use] a 'hands-off' policy, partly because of the potential or even the perception of abuse, and also because corporal punishment is not a necessary means for correction in the discipling nurture of school-aged children. Extra tasks, time out, removal of privilege, and face-to-face talks are appropriate alternatives at the school level."

Stronks observes, "The Christian home and the Christian school are at times, we must sadly acknowledge, guilty of the same abusive practices as found in our society. We must unequivocally be opposed to any form of abuse."

Human rights violators should be prosecuted

... continued from page 1

general amnesty to human rights violators. This covers an armed conflict in which as many as 150,000 were killed and 50,000 "disappeared," that is, were kidnapped from the streets or their homes and then killed, usually after torture.

ICCHRLA strongly supports calls by the Alliance Against Impunity, a broad-based group of Guatemalan church, human rights and non-governmental organizations, for the guilty persons to be named publicly and be prosecuted for their crimes. Anything short of this would deny justice to the victims of human rights violations, says ICCHRLA.

ICCHRLA calls attention to the fact that in this country over 60 per cent of the people are indigenous, that is native people, but none of them was involved in the peace accord. The accord makes general statements about indigenous rights but is short on specific programs for achieving its goals.

Last April many ordinary citizens told a visiting delegation from ICCHRLA that peace would only become a reality for them when they would be able to adequately feed and educate their children, and when they would feel some measure of personal security. The "war" is over, but the peace accord has failed to bring peace.

Guatemalans cry for land

(ICCHRLA Newsletter)

TORONTO — Recently, the Roman Catholic bishops of Guatemala published a common pastoral letter entitled "The Cry for Land." The Canadian churches represented by ICCHRLA, along with many other international bodies committed to accompanying Guatemalans in their struggle for justice and basic human rights, consider this document to be of the utmost significance.

Since the public release of this pastoral letter, a powerful body representing Guatemalan landowners has accused the bishops of involving themselves in matters outside their competence and of creating conflict as opposed to unity in Guatemala. A communique by army officers who participated in an unsuccessful May coup attempt characterized the bishops' pastoral letter as a justification for terrorism.

Correct analysis

Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo, whose government has put forward no land reform program after two-and-a-half years in office, observed that the church knew how to put its finger on the country's central problems. It is clear, he added, that unless living conditions for rural Guatemalans are improved, a social explosion may be produced, with incalculable consequences.

The introduction to the pastoral letter says that "'The Cry for Land' is undoubtedly the strongest, most dramatic and most desperate cry heard in Guatemala. It bursts forth from millions of Guatemalan hearts yearning not only to possess the land, but to be possessed by it. It is a cry from the 'People of Corn' who, on the one hand, identify with furrows, sowing and harvest and who, on the other hand, find themselves expelled from the land by an unjust and punitive system. They are like strangers in the land, which belonged to them for thousands of years; they are considered second-class citizens in the nation forged by their extraordinary ancestors."

The letter goes on to describe the social conditions of rural Guatemalans: "The goods and services which the state is obliged to provide for all Guatemalans never reach the majority [of the people. They have] neither elementary schools nor informal education; they have no sanitation services, or social security, or housing to give them a modicum of hygiene and dignity."

News

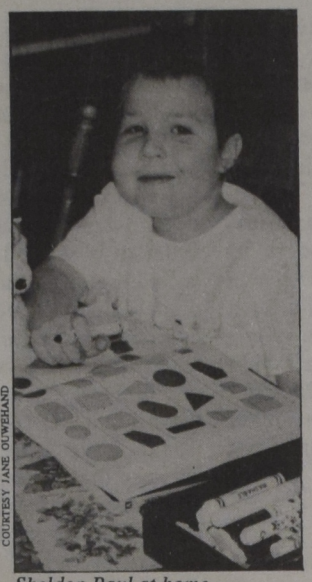
Sheldon Paul has finished his race

Jane Ouwehand

AGASSIZ, B.C. — On Feb. 20, Sheldon Paul died of leukemia at the age of six. (see "Will Sheldon be first at the finish line," CC, Feb. 21). "We had hoped for a peaceful death," says his mother Joanne, "but it was an intense physical struggle. Yet emotionally and spiritually, he was at peace." During his last 36 hours Sheldon's lungs were failing and all his body systems were closing down.

Five days later the funeral was held in the Central Chilliwack Mennonite Brethren Church, though the Pauls are Presbyterian. Most of the 600 seats were filled. Since all the teachers and many of the students wanted to attend, Agassiz Christian School was closed.

Sheldon's body was carried into the church in a plain, unvarnished coffin by those who had cared for him most during his illness: his parents, John and Joanne, his sisters, Karen and Jessica, his doctor, Lachlan MacIntosh, and Rachel Workman, a close family friend.



COURTESY JANE OUWEHAND

Sheldon Paul at home.

The first song was in a haunting, minor key: "Hear my cry, O Lord, Listen to my prayer." The words of the second chapter of Job were read: Job's three friends come and sit in silence with him for a week before they begin to speak. We heard Charlie Peacock's song "Now is the time for Tears." Sheldon's aunt, Anne Venema, read an eulogy about his life and about his bravery during his illness.

Our Savior's in life and death

Rev. Steve Laug preached from Psalm 77 about the questions we bring to God: "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever?"

Question and Answer 1 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* were read, confessing that in life and in death we belong to our faithful Savior.

A song and video presentation showed scenes of Sheldon's life. Sheldon's sisters and mother spoke about some of the things they had done together with Sheldon. Rev. Laug read a quote from Sheldon, "I hope my home in heaven is just like my home here on earth; with the same backyard and front yard...."

Psalm 23 was sung. Rev. Laug spoke again about Psalm 77:10-20 about God's greatness in his redemption of his people. Laug told how the family gathered to sing Psalm 23 quietly to Sheldon in his last hours, but Sheldon himself sang louder than all of them, despite the oxygen tube in his mouth.

The service ended with the song, "Home Free, the Ultimate Healing" by Wayne Watson: "...Oh Lord, not mine but your will be done, Oh let it be."

Many guests kept their bulletins with a full-color reproduction of a picture Sheldon had drawn of himself in a racing car crossing the finish line in front of a stand-full of smiling people. Underneath were the words of 2 Tim. 4:7,8: "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me in that day."

Afterwards Dr. MacIntosh' comment was that "Sheldon fought to live 'til the very end, but he was never afraid to die."

The funeral was a blessing to many; there was deep grief and many tears, but also the rich hope of life at home in heaven.

Poster wins prize on funeral day

Jane Ouwehand

AGASSIZ, B.C. — The day after Sheldon Paul's funeral, Shel-don's father got a call from the Royal Bank headquarters in Vancouver. Sheldon had won a province-wide poster contest. John told the representative that they had just buried Sheldon the day before; he cried, and then the Royal Bank representative cried. Sheldon had won first prize for the best poster showing diversity and multiculturalism.

The Royal Bank is celebrating 100 years of banking in British Columbia. On March 4, it celebrated at the Trade and Convention Centre in Vancouver, with the bank president coming from Toronto to present a $300,000 donation to the Rick Hansen Foundation and to recognize the winners of the poster (age 5-8) and essay (age 9-17) contests. The Kindergarten and Grade 1 class from Agassiz Christian School attended this event along with the Pauls.

When Wendy Weaver, Sheldon's teacher had heard of the poster contest, she had encouraged her Kindergarten and Grade 1 students to enter. They sent Sheldon's picture with a letter asking to have the original returned, since he was critically ill.

SENT VIA E-MAIL BY JOHN PAUL

Sheldon Paul's winning poster.

In this together

Ten finalists were selected, and on the day of Sheldon's funeral, his poster was chosen as the best.

His picture shows a park scene with a bridge over a river and a boat in the water. People from two nationalities are in the boat together. On the grass a child in a wheelchair is playing ball with a child who can walk. Someone is skateboarding on the sidewalk. People have commented on the peacefulness of the scene.

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Editorial

Will the real imperialists please stand up?

A month ago, a member of Russian president Yeltsin's staff, Andrei Loginov, proposed that the national parliament formally declare a special status for Russia's traditional religions. Anatoli Pchelintsev, head of the independent Institute of Religion and Law in Moscow, thinks that by traditional religions is meant: the Orthodox Church, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. If Loginov's proposal is ever accepted that will mean trouble for all other religions in Russia, including Roman Catholic and Protestant expressions of Christianity.

I was reminded of this news item when I heard a radio caller talk about Christian missionaries. "To bring Jesus to other countries and violate their ancient cultures and religions is unacceptable," said the caller. "We have to celebrate all spiritualities," he added.

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This man's idea of not violating ancient cultures and religions is becoming more prominent in our society. It's alright for Christianity to weed its own garden, say more and more people, but don't transplant the gospel to other gardens. That would show lack of respect.

For a faith that believes in heeding Jesus' call to disciple all nations this post-modern attitude spells trouble. Faithful Christians are in danger of being accused of imperialism, even though "imperialism" carries the notion of expanding territory by force, something which Jesus would never allow. But that explanation won't impress the critics. We are considered intolerant when we preach Christ to Hindus or Jews.

Symbols of empire

So you would think that people in the West would follow the example given in other parts of the world and declare Christianity to be *our* traditional religion that should enjoy special protection. Wrong. It's alright to protect traditional religions in Israel and Saudi Arabia, but you can't do that in Canada! That would be intolerant!

An article in a recent issue of the *Globe and Mail* makes this point abundantly clear: "All these things [among them, Christmas concerts featuring Baby Jesus, shepherds and wise men] once so familiar, are completely unknown to most Canadian children now. This is quite reasonable. These are, after all, symbols of Empire, conquest and predominant Protestantism. While I feel nostalgia for the familiar things I grew up with, like most Canadians, I know that they are archaic in the Canada of the 1990s."

I find it rather strange that in North America people are divesting themselves of "traditional" religions faster than you can say "sin" (which is socially taboo), while in other parts of the world traditional religions get special protection.

Let me say first of all, that we are not in favor of giving special status to any religion, here in Canada or elsewhere. The age of the establishment of a certain religion or brand of faith is over. But that does not mean that we should try to move religions from the public sphere. It is our view that all religions should be allowed to express themselves publicly, even resort to proselytizing, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendliness. And may the best religion win.

Fundamentalists want power

But why is it that in some parts of the world nations are either maintaining or resorting to the establishment of traditional faiths while in the West we try to dismantle ours?

It has to do with a nation's desire for cultural and national protection, mainly, and it also has to do with the character of the traditional faith.

Some religions see nothing wrong with being a civil religion, that is losing one's identity in a nation's institutions, culture and tradition. Islam is such a faith; Hinduism is, Judaism is as well. Establishmentarian moves are welcome in the eyes of especially the fundamentalist sectors of these religions. Adherents to these faiths are not free to convert, at least not in the countries where these faiths predominate. Socio-economic penalties are usually imposed on those who leave the "traditional" faith. Some people even lose their lives because they change religions.

It must be admitted, though, that fundamentalist Christians also have establishmentarian tendencies, even today. And in earlier centuries, Christianity cruelly persecuted people for being heretics. One cringes at the horrific stories of forced conversions of Jews in 15th century Spain, for example.

From the point of view of the state, protecting the major religions brings social and political stability and coherence, features that a state craves more than anything. And so these religions and states work hand in hand to oppose any proselytizing by other faiths.

The establishment of a new religion

But why, then, do countries in North America and Europe not follow suit? Why is there a movement afoot not only to oppose the establishment of Christianity, but to remove it from the public sphere altogether?

Because secularism has become the new religion of the West, and that religion has been and is being established with tremendous cooperation from educational institutions, political parties and the media.

A traditional religion like Christianity stands in the way of the new national and cultural cohesion that most Westerners seek, and thus it makes perfect sense to hear someone say that we should discard the symbols of the old Canada and embrace the new symbols of pluralistic secularism.

We should realize, therefore, that Christian institutions are in a vulnerable position, even in the West. But isn't it great to recall the last words of Jesus before he left this earth into our care: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"? We don't need to fear those who want to establish their brand of religion, be it secular or Muslim. We have divine authority behind us and within us as we spread the Good News of reconciliation.

BW

Letters

Plantinga gives strong ideas to chew on

I greatly appreciated the article by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. you printed recently in CC. The insightful and solidly Reformed thought and heart displayed in the article are most encouraging. The article is a perfect example of why I continue to read — and Canadians continue to need — a publication like *Christian Courier*.

My faith has been especially enriched by Plantinga's articulation of four ideas:

(1) giving God the "benefit of the doubt" as we would to a human lover who appears to have acted badly — an excellent way of explaining an approach to evil to non- or new Christians;

(2) the value of arriving at a "second simplicity" after struggling through complexity, an idea that helps me to respond to those Christians who trumpet a naive simplicity — and a concept perfectly illustrated in the life of the late Henri Nouwen;

(3) defining true Christian scholarship as joyful participation in a kingdom project, over against carving a niche for ourselves or making a name for ourselves or anxious striving — an approach which professors at Christian liberal arts colleges would do well to articulate more clearly, more often and with more personal vulnerability to their senior students; and

(4) a call for us, including Christian pastors,to open up ourselves to more passionate interest in God's "personality" (identifying characteristics) and the ways it is reflected in humanity and the rest of creation. I'll be chewing on this one for quite a while.

Keep up the good work.

Bill Fledderus
Scarborough, Ont.

Feature worthy of lovers of God

Oh, that the "feature" pages in each issue of CC contained complex truth so simply but powerfully preached as that proclaimed by Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. ("The life of the mind is an act of love," CC, Feb. 21).

Spell-binding, moving, inspirational! Your beautiful lay-out significantly enhanced its presentation and impact. That, too, belongs to becoming "a more accomplished lover of God...."

Ralph L. De Groot
Peterborough, Ont.

Christian athletes make the Kingdom visible

I've been enjoying the reaction to my partially tongue-in-cheek column on the salaries of athletes as a measure of their worth. Nowhere in the column did I conclude that the highest-paid athletes somehow have a greater sense of "Kingdom worth," but simply that if there are enough consumers willing to pay to see them, why shouldn't they be compensated accordingly?

This holds true in other areas of the entertainment industry (after all, that's what professional sports are) as well. If NBC doesn't want to pay Jerry Seinfeld $1,000,000 per episode, another network gladly will. That's the free market, which certainly isn't perfect, and is arguably unfair, as well.

Bill Van Dyk's response was a good example of forthright, honest expression, which one hopes takes place in a dialogue within a Christian publication. Mr. Terpstra's impassioned appeal on behalf of church organists brought forth a chuckle in the staff room, although his admission to be a non-sports fan (and misspelling Wayne Gretzky's name) weakens his position.

I was disheartened by Mr. Wolters' *ad hominum* attack (i.e., questioning my ability to sort out my Christian discretion).

One aspect of the substance of his letter cries out for correction. To say that pro athletes cannot work best in terms of the Kingdom goes against what I see (as an actual sports observer) weekly. It doesn't take a lot of effort to read articles about athletes visiting sick children in cancer wards, establishing trust funds for charities, coaching voluntarily at their former schools, organizing and helping serve meals for the homeless at Christmas, leading chapel services before Sunday games or thanking God in public for his role in their lives.

In fact I would argue that the Christian pro athlete requires much more boldness and faith to minister in his job setting than I or Mr. Wolters do.

Reggie White of the Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers is an ordained minister who wears his love for Christ and responsibility for ministry on his sleeve. He's not doing Kingdom work? Orel Hershiser describes how he hummed hymns on the mound to calm him and is not shy about expressing how Christ's teachings changed his life. He tramples on the law of God?

Rob Janssens
Burlington, Ont.

Our priority must be justice to the victim

Thank your for publishing pastor Luth's letter (Jan. 10) and an anonymous letter (Feb. 14) in which both writers confront John Tamming with some explicit facts concerning sexually abusive pastors, facts John had trivialized by calling their behavior "slips." Tamming is a typical example of an angering trend among our civil judges who show an undeserved compassion for the sexual offender without much, if any, consideration for his victim.

I find it encouraging that in the same issue in which this anonymous victim of sexual abuse cries out in pain over the gross injustices done to her by her abusive pastor and his council, CC features on the front page two brave B.C. women who demand the removal of a civil judge for showing considerably more compassion for the brutal sex

See **JUSTICE** *page 6...*

Redeemer offers options

Kudos to the editor and staff for highlighting both the need for Christian education and the opportunities that exist from many excellent institutions at all educational levels. I enjoyed the entire issue.

A clarification on the story mentioning Redeemer alumnus Pearl Samplonius. The Alberta Department of Education's lack of recognition of Redeemer's education program for purposes of certification shouldn't be construed as a roadblock for those wishing to study at Redeemer and later pursue teaching positions in Alberta. Redeemer offers program options that make provision for students wishing to meet certification requirements in other provinces. While recognition by the Department of Education would be preferred, other avenues provide workable alternatives for students wishing to keep their options open.

Redeemer remains a good choice for those interested in obtaining a job in education. Despite the tough job market over the last three years, over 80 per cent of Redeemer education graduates have obtained teaching positions.

Mark Van Beveren
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Letters (continued)

Justice for the victim

... *continued from page 5*

offender by giving him a ridiculously light sentence, than for his victim who must go through years of agony in putting her ruined life back together again.

Tamming's lenient attitude towards our offending pastors, while not even mentioning the ruined lives they have left behind, and this anonymous woman's testimony of the gross injustices done to her by her consistory, are both alarming signals that this spirit of tolerance towards the abuser while neglecting to consider the pain of his victim has also found inroads in our own Christian Reformed community.

However, we must remind each other that this form of injustice we may not tolerate. The injustices done to this anonymous writer must haunt every man and woman in the CRC.

Make it fair

I believe that our church must find more compassionate ways of dealing with victimized women. Very few churches have female elders as yet, so the traumatized woman has to go through the intimidating procedure of appearing before an all-male council and making herself vulnerable by exposing her pastor's secret sexual life with her. Considering the sinful inclinations in all of us, we should not be surprised when all-male councils show a tendency to sympathize with and protect a member of their own gender.

Therefore, I suggest that it is not unreasonable for CRC women to unanimously request that in any congregation where sexual abuse occurs, the victim gets a fair hearing by a committee made up of an equal number of males and females who should be mandated to make doing justice to the victim their top priority. In the meantime, I plead with all our church leaders to never allow their sympathy and compassion with the abuser — as much as they feel they must take this Christian attitude — to take priority over doing justice to his victim first.

Submitted in advocacy for justice to all victims of sexual abuse.

Trudy Joldersma
Calgary, Alta.

Education issue food for thought

Today is the first day of March break. After clearing away the laundry that had piled up during the busy weeks of report cards, parent-teacher interviews, open house/science fair, etc., I relaxed with a cup of coffee and some back issues of magazines. One of them happened to be the education issue of *Christian Courier.*

What wonderful reading, I kept adding page numbers to the front under "keep" — I think I'll just have to save the whole issue. I was moved, touched, challenged, stretched and blessed by the various articles.

Thank you to all the contributors and to you and your staff for giving us such worthwhile "food for thought."

Beatrice Vandervelde
Willowdale, Ont.

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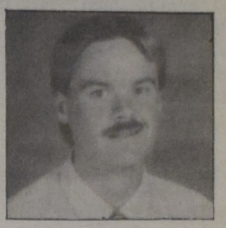
Sports

Kingdom work shrouded by secular reporting

What's the score?



Rob Janssens

It wouldn't be all that difficult to brainstorm 20 or more comparisons between those who ply their trade as professional athletes and the rest of us. The sheer odds against becoming, say, a major league baseball player are astronomical, especially considering that so much of the talent has been drafted from foreign countries such as Australia, Japan, Korea, and a whole host of Caribbean nations, including Cuba. For example, of the total number of players in the Los Angeles Dodgers organization (including their minor league affiliations), over 50 per cent were born outside of the United States. In fact, there are now 600,000 Americans for every one major leaguer born in the U.S.

Media has huge role

Consequently, for the average fan, their heroes seem a long way off, even when you're watching them perform live and in person in a city near you. Though hardly a season ticket holder, I have been known to attend the odd Blue Jays and Maple Leafs games in Toronto's two most popular cathedrals (sometimes even when I didn't get free tickets). My feeling has always been like that of a dream: I'm there, and the players are there, but the familiarity between player and fan is certainly not. To them, I'm just one of thousands.

As a result, the media plays a huge role in allowing the fans to get up-close-and-personal with the athletes in a way that sitting in the Gradens greys or watching on TV certainly doesn't allow. And in the Golden Horseshoe, there is non-stop satisfaction for a media junkie like myself, and plenty of others. We read two or more newspapers a day to review the game summaries, pore over the statistics, get the columnists' opinions (which are always inferior to our own, of course), and glance at the standings, as if to assure ourselves that our favorite team hasn't become defunct (although with the Leafs this year...).

Catharsis

We also listen to sports talk radio, which can be cathartic for fans after a loss by the local team, as the many "experts" out there phone in and offer their advice on how to fix the mess their favorite franchise is in. It's a form of group therapy, really. The hosts act as moderators/psychologists while the heart-broken fans pour out their souls. From a gender studies standpoint, it's noteworthy to observe that while attendance at NHL games is around 45 per cent female, the callers to these programs are nearly exclusively men (and probably single ones, at that).

With the rise in popularity of the Internet, the traditional media are beginning to grow redundant, as fans can get instant updates of action in progress, read game previews and summaries, and a whole host of other stories and sporting developments which could previously be read only the next day in a newspaper or watched on the six and eleven o'clock news, in which the sports report takes up all of five minutes.

To be sure, in order to be current and knowledgeable regarding the latest happenings in the major sports leagues, the fan of the '90s needs the media, both to provide information and to get access to the players by way of interviews and as a first-hand source. However, let the buyer beware! Ever since Watergate when Woodward and Bernstein helped bring down a presidency, reporters — even sports reporters — have been after the big scoop which will evaluate their careers. This does not prevent them from reporting even the most ridiculous of rumors, relying on un-named sources who may have their own agenda — and especially with a tight deadline and a desire to get the story first — even relying on incomplete or incorrect information.

Truthfulness not a priority

The participants (players, coaches, managers, etc.) also need to be treated with a grain of salt. They too have a personal bias when giving interviews, which at the very last may cloud the truth and at worst lead them to lie blatantly. Recently a general manager told a reporter that his coach would absolutely not be fired. The next day, the reverse happened. Players may also manipulate the facts of the media, especially during contract haggling with owners, in order to add leverage to their salary positions.

The most lamentable bias, as I see it, is against the Christian athlete. Common sense dictates that a reporter will feel most comfortable and show a higher degree of favorable coverage to those he relates to best. Very few journalists are Christians; therefore, despite the surprisingly high percentage of athletes who are, the spiritual aspect of their performance is shunned, if not outrightly belittled.

This had led to two unfortunate results. First, non-Christian fans are prevented from benefiting from the Christian witness of these special athletes, whose light shines in what can be the darkest of subcultures: pro sports. Second, and just as grievous, well-meaning Christians become too quick to pounce on the "lawlessness" and "sinfulness" in this subculture. Sadly, reactions to previous columns have verified this. Then again, though, with the disposition of the secular media, should I be surprised?

Only half of the story is being told. I therefore urge all Christians to analyze professional sports more closely in order to find the wholesome, the uplifting, and yes, even the presence of the Holy Spirit's work in this sphere.

Rob Janssens teaches Grade 5 at Trinity Chr. School, Burlington, Ont.

ARTS & MEDIA

William Shakespeare's Hamlet

Branagh's *Hamlet* is bright and brilliant

Marian Van Til

William Shakespeare's Hamlet

Rated PG.
Stars Kenneth Branagh, Derek Jacobi, Julie Christie, Richard Briers, Kate Winslet.

This version of the tragic end of an ancient Danish royal family is more truly "William Shakespeare's Hamlet" than any previous film version of the play. It is not a condensed version aimed at modern film- (as opposed to theatre-) goers who get restless after two hours. And it isn't Shakespeare-made-easy.

What it *is* is Shakespeare's entire, more than four-hour-long tragedy freshly interpreted for the big screen by Irish/English thespian Kenneth Branagh. Foremost among Branagh's many talents is his ability to "popularize" Shakespeare, and that talent is on obvious and fascinating display here.

No stuffy scholar

In the Shakespearean history *Henry V,* in the comedy *Much Ado About Nothing,* and now in the tragedy *Hamlet,* Branagh draws modern audiences to the late-16th century Bard through his ability to totally assimilate Shakespeare's language, making it sound as though he, and everybody, speaks it every day. He then keeps his audiences engaged because he thoroughly understands the structures of the plays and comprehends Shakespeare's worldview.

Branagh realizes that Shakespeare in his day was a popular entertainer. Branagh knows that the drama and intrigue of Shakespeare's stories, the humor or tears they evoke, the asides to the audience and the soul-searching soliloquies lend themselves to being adapted to film much more naturally than one might at first think.

There's a major difference between Shakespeare and most modern entertainers, however. He was no shallow jester or exploiter of maudlin sentiments. Shakespeare's *entertainment* exhibits extraordinary wisdom about life and uncanny insight into human nature. And in Shakespeare's work, whole worlds of characters speak that wisdom with poetry and wit.

For anyone who unfortunately missed reading *Hamlet* in school, its plot concerns a king of Denmark (Hamlet, Sr.) who had suddenly died less than two months before the story begins.

Hamlet ponders, "To be or not to be...."

As the play opens, the King's ambitious brother, Claudius, is proceeding to quickly marry the dead King's wife, Gertrude, an act repulsive to young Prince Hamlet.

The stage for all further action is set when the ghost of the King informs Prince Hamlet (the Hamlet of the play) that his father was murdered by his uncle. The ghost asks Hamlet to avenge his father's death.

So Hamlet vows revenge. But first he needs to be sure that the ghost is a true spirit and not a demon who wishes to lure him into committing a mortal sin. (Gertrude will be left to her own and Fate's devices.)

Hamlet feigns madness so that he can stealthily determine the truth. He also devises a play in which visiting actors tell his uncle's story so that he can determine whether the man reacts in guilt.

One important benefit of a full-length *Hamlet* is that there is no need to truncate the roles of the secondary characters, avoiding the feeling given by many condensed versions that Hamlet is the only important character. When Shakespeare's whole story unfolds, Hamlet becomes a sun around which significant planets revolve rather than a lone supernova that explodes and is gone. He is one of a community of players, some his allies, some his mortal enemies, some ambivalent.

There is Horatio, Hamlet's best friend and confidant; Ophelia, whom Hamlet loves and who sinks into true madness when he appears to reject her; Laertes, Ophelia's brother who eventually becomes the instrument who determines Hamlet's fate; Polonius, Claudius's closest advisor and Ophelia and Laertes's father; Rosencrantz and Gildenstern, erstwhile friends of Hamlet's who are hired by Claudius to watch and, later, thwart Hamlet.

Against the palace intrigue carried on by all these and several additional characters is the backdrop of a possible invasion by Fortinbras, Prince of Norway.

No psychologizing

Branagh sets the play in what looks like 19th century Czarist Russia (England's Blenheim Palace plays the part.) This setting works very well, evoking both an indeterminate historical remoteness and an imperial splendor which allows the 16th century language to feel right and satisfies audience hankerings for the rich costumes we associate with historical drama.

Branagh's is not the dark Hamlet we've come to expect, neither visually nor psychologically. Much of the tragedy is played out in a colossal and dazzling hall of mirrors; and while we see the grey skies of winter, snow blankets the mammoth palace grounds in white.

Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be..." soliloquy in which he contemplates suicide and the ultimate end of humanity is spoken while he stares at himself in one of those mirrors. It's a masterful touch, visually reinforcing Hamlet's agonizing self-examination.

Branagh aptly captures *Shakespeare's* Hamlet, free of the intense psychoanalysis and overwrought search for motives that too many modern critics impose on this complex character. Branagh's Hamlet is a young man of great potential whose natural, happy camaraderie with friends (and with his love, Ophelia) is shrouded by the death of his beloved father, and then morally affronted by his mother's fickleness and quick betrayal of her husband's memory.

A moral universe

When Hamlet learns of his uncle's foul part in his father's death and is asked by the ghost to avenge that death, he gathers a new, almost manic and dangerous kind of energy. Yet he's initially not sure he can do what the ghost asks; he's no killer. Not because he's a wimp but because he has a finely tuned moral sense and his worldview is saturated in Christianity. It is no small thing, for instance, to kill a king, God's anointed, even if he has murdered your father.

Grace and nature war

Justice will out: Claudius must pay with his life for taking the life of the king. But Hamlet refuses to kill his uncle while the man is at prayer, partly out of respect, partly because he's afraid Claudius will then be in a state of grace and will enter heaven, and Claudius deserves nothing less than damnation.

It seems right, in that world, that the legitimate heir to the throne should be the instrument of retribution: he embodies the law of the land. Yet seeds of humanism here make us, and perhaps Hamlet, doubt; and make him trust a human ghost rather than the Holy Ghost.

Needless to say, these are not the kind of spiritual, philosophical and moral dilemmas one normally finds in today's cinema (or theatre). Shakespeare's plays, especially obvious in the tragedies, are undergirded with a sense of the world being framed by a Christian morality. That, to me, is what makes them so interesting for modern Christians and so refreshing in our own secular and amoral world — that, in addition to gripping stories told in beautifully crafted language.

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Church

Cantor fed secret porn addiction

Valerie Walker

HALIFAX — "The man was living a double life," says a local rabbi after his colleague was fined for possessing child pornography.

Stuart Friedman, 42, was sentenced in a Halifax court on Jan. 7, the day after police and Canada Customs inspectors searched his apartment and seized his personal cache of magazines, video tapes and downloaded Internet images.

Friedman's arrest and conviction was a shock to members of the orthodox Beth Israel synagogue, where his job as cantor included instructing children in the Jewish faith.

Led weekly prayers

Friedman led the weekly prayers and was well respected in the synagogue which hired him in August 1994. "The cantor acts as the congregation's emissary to God," explains Joel Jacobson, a member of the synagogue and a columnist with the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*. "He must demonstrate strict obedience to Jewish law, and in this way, is considered the most pious one among us."

In a column on Jan. 20, Jacobson asserted that Friedman, by all appearances, was just such a person. "No one in the community knew," wrote Jacobson, "or, because of Mr. Friedman's position in the clerical hierarchy and the dignity and devotion with which he performed his duties, even worried about what he did during time away from the synagogue."

Friedman's observance of Jewish law left him isolated from other members of the synagogue, who, while orthodox, were not as kosher as Friedman and would have been hesitant to invite him to their homes. "They would be unable to offer him anything," says Jacobson, "except coffee in a styrofoam cup."

Loneliness, says Aranov, and the pressure of being 42 years old and unmarried exacerbated Friedman's problem. "In our faith," he says, "you have to be married to maintain a normal existence."

Rabbi Saul Aranov explains that Jewish law holds marriage and sex as sacred. Choosing to be unmarried and celibate is not only discouraged, but is considered sinful.

Aranov said that young unmarried cantors and rabbis often accept work only in major urban centres until they marry. Large cities provide a social network that makes it much easier to meet a person who would share the same adherence to Jewish law.

Aranov is unsure whether Friedman was single by choice, but says that he and his wife often asked Friedman if he was dating anyone. While Friedman was an occasional guest in the Aranov's home, Aranov was never invited to Friedman's apartment and he described Friedman as a very private person.

Search for anonymity?

Aranov agreed that Friedman probably found the Internet attractive because of the feeling of anonymity that it provided. He also allowed that it was possible that Friedman might have purposely looked for work in a smaller, isolated community because of his involvement with something as shameful as child pornography. In Halifax, he was able to lead a very quiet, very private life.

Not only was Friedman isolated from the members of his synagogue, but also from the support and scrutiny of other cantors and rabbis which would be available to him in a city with many synagogues or a Jewish university. Synagogues are totally independent from one another, and there is no regional governing body that provides guidance or support to congregations or their leaders.

Aranov, one of only two rabbis in Nova Scotia, felt the lack of contact with professional peers over the last month as he tried to lead the members of Beth Israel synagogue through a sort of recovery. In the days following Friedman's arrest, ministers from several churches in Halifax called Aranov to offer their sympathy and support.

Remember the good

Even though Friedman will not be disciplined in any way by the Jewish community, it is unlikely that he will be able to find work as a cantor until he receives treatment. An application to work in another synagogue would require that he produce a reference from the synagogue where he worked most recently.

In a sermon preached the week after Friedman's arrest, Aranov urged the members of the synagogue to remember the good things that Friedman had done, and reminded them that no one is immune to struggles with sin.

"He was the picture of piety," says Aranov, "he was leading two totally separate existences." The last lessons that Friedman led in the local Hebrew school warned his students to guard against sexual impurity.

Rabbi Saul Aranov estimates that it will take five or six months to replace Friedman, who flew to his family home in Baltimore immediately following his sentencing.

Study finds TV ads ignore spirituality

SPOKANE, Wash. (EP) — From dancing grizzly bears to bungee-jumping chip dippers, you never know what you're going to see in television advertising. But according to a study by researchers Georgie Ann Weatherby and Brendan Maguire you do know what you're not going to see — religion.

According to their report, presented at a recent meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, a study of 797 TV commercials found that only 16 had any religious or spiritual content.

That content varied from conventional religious symbols, such as churches and church choirs, to irreverent depictions such as a devil winning an argument with an angel during a Wendy's ad and an office supply commercial in which a company representative climbs a mountain to seek spiritual advice from a holy man.

The researchers suggested that advertisers might be reluctant to use religion in commercials because of the possibility of offending some viewers, or because they prefer to concentrate on visually arresting images such as sports action and attractive models.

Denominationally, U.S. Congress 'looks like America'

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The 105th U.S. Congress may still be dominated by wealthy white men, but in religion, the U.S.'s lawmakers "look like America," according to a new study of congressional religious affiliations.

According to a study conducted by Albert Menendez, associate director of the Maryland-based Americans for Religious Liberty, Roman Catholics comprise the largest single religious groups in Congress, with 151 of the total 535 members. Catholics are also the largest religious group in the U.S., and have had the largest congressional presence since 1964.

Southern Baptists are the nation's second-largest religious group, and have the second-largest congressional presence with 67 members.

Other groups with significant representation in the 105th Congress are United Methodists (59), Presbyterians (55), Episcopalians (42), Jews (35), "Protestants" (28), Lutherans (22), Mormons (14), United Church of Christ (10) and "Christians" (10).

Menendez also found six Eastern Orthodox Christians, 30 members of Congress from smaller religious groups, and seven who claim no religious affiliation of any kind, but no Buddhists, Hindus or Moslems.

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The comfort of being hopeless

"We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (Rom.5:2).

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
★ Laura Smit
Al Wolters

I'm currently taking a class on *The Consolation of Philosophy*, a book by the sixth century Christian philosopher Boethius. Boethius wrote this book while in prison awaiting execution. In the book he imagines that Lady Philosophy comes to comfort him. Her comfort is of the most bracing sort. She tells him to stop feeling sorry for himself; she helps him sort out what really matters in his life — those things which can't be taken from him by imprisonment or even death. Her comfort is presented as a kind of medicine, a cure for the self-pity into which Boethius has fallen.

As part of the treatment, Boethius is told to get rid of the emotions which have been causing him such distress. These include emotions we would expect him to fight against: fear and sorrow. But he is also told to get rid of hope. In order to face imprisonment with dignity and calm, Boethius needs to become hopeless.

Strange advice

This seems a strange sort of thing for a Christian to write, since hope is consistently required of us by Scripture. The passage in Romans 5 is one of many places where we are encouraged to be hopeful people, to persevere in hope. So I've been thinking about Boethius' call to hopelessness, trying to make sense of it. My professor says that hope is the attempt to seize the future rather than accepting what God sends, that hope is a way of exerting control over our future. So we must let go of hope if we are to trust in God's provident care.

In some communities, young girls used to have a *hope chest* which they would fill with handiwork, crafted in the expectation that someday they would marry and have a home of their own in which to use all these carefully decorated linens. Surely, there were some girls who filled hope chests but who never married, whose stored up hopes were never met.

Does Christian hope require that such hopes never be abandoned, that we continue to prepare and dream for a future which it is increasingly clear will never come? Or does there come a time when a young woman may stop doing embroidery, stop filling the chest with items which will never be used?

Raising expectations

In Guillaume Apollinaire's poem *Le Pont Mirabeau*, the poet stands on the Mirabeau Bridge watching the river flow slowly underneath him. He thinks about past loves which will never come again. "How slow life is!" he exclaims, "and how violent hope is!" The poem suggests that hope's violence is connected to an inability to let go of the past. Hope keeps alive dreams which are no longer possible. Hope stirs us up and raises expectations. Hope for one thing may make it impossible to be content with what we receive instead. The tempo of hope is out of syne with the tempo of life.

Hope's object is the key

It does seem that there are different kinds of hope, and that we sometimes hope in things which are unworthy or untrustworthy, things which will leave our hopes disappointed. When we hope in God, he does not disappoint us, but other things we hope in may fail to materialize. Whether hope is a virtue or not depends on what we're hoping in. We are told to hope in the promise of the glory of God. But we are not commanded to hope that we will all be happily married someday.

Boethius is to hope for a future spent in heaven with God. But he is not promised that he will be released from prison, so maybe he ought not hope for that. If he had spent his time hoping for such release, scheming to influence the king to grant him a pardon, wondering whether some influential friend or relative might not be persuaded to exert a little influence..., such hopes would have been frustrated. Investing energy in such hopes would have been a distraction from a proper focus on God's provident care for him, the care which had been there when life was treating him well and was still there while he was in prison.

Hope and suffering linked

In Romans 5, Paul speaks of hope in connection with suffering. "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

Both immediately before this statement and immediately after it, Paul talks about our reconciliation with God. His hope allows him to face the prospect of dying and seeing God face to face at the last judgment. Without his hope, not only in the resurrection but also in the saving work of Christ which makes us right with God, Paul would not be able to face such judgment with equanimity.

But Paul's hope doesn't lead him to expect that he will not suffer in this life, or that he will never be imprisoned or martyred, or that if he only waits long enough his true love will appear and he'll live happily ever after with her, using the linens accumulated in her hope chest.

Such hopes *do* disappoint us. Our daydreams, fears and desires lead us to place our hope in imaginary futures of our own devising, rather than in the future which God has prepared for us.

Laura Smit is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who is currently doing doctoral work in philosophical aesthetics at Boston University, Boston, Mass.

Only 45 per cent of Germans believe in God

BERLIN, Germany (REC) — A survey commissioned by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* shows that only 45 per cent of all Germans believe in God. Those who deny the existence of God make up 28 per cent of the population, while 27 per cent said they did not know whether God existed.

Church members make up about 70 per cent of the population, however, so there are numerous unbelievers or agnostics on church roles.

Catholics fared somewhat better than Protestants: 63 per cent of German Catholics believe in God, while only 45 per cent of Protestants do. As for Jesus Christ being the Son of God, only 26 per cent of the population and 54 per cent of church members accepted this as truth.

There were significant differences for the former West Germany and the former East Germany. In the former West, 86 per cent are church members, while in the East, only 30 per cent are. Similarly, only seven per cent of the former Easterners attended church once a month, compared to 25 per cent of the Westerners.

Thomas Kruger, spokesperson for the Protestant Federation of Germany (EKD), said the questions were too simple to show a decrease in religious belief. He noted that many from the former East Germany were "non-believers by neglect." At least two generations have been raised there without the gospel, Kruger added.

The number of believers represents a five per cent drop since a similar survey in 1992.

Greek Evangelical Church debates rebaptism

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — By a narrow margin, the synod of the Greek Evangelical Church (GEC) decided that converts would not be permitted to be rebaptized. Some converts considered their infant baptism insufficient. However, the church supported its confession of faith, saying that it excluded anabaptism (re-baptism).

Some delegates argued that this single issue should not compel brothers and sisters to leave the church.

The synod noted that since 1989 the GEC has allowed such members to be re-baptized in another church and keep their GEC membership if they so desired.

Meeting late in 1996, the GEC also received two new congregations, bringing their total to 25 in Greece (there are four others abroad). These new urban congregations reflected the growing urbanization of Greece. On the other hand, several rural GEC congregations are struggling with declining and ageing populations. To aid these latter congregations, the church will ask each new pastoral worker to work at least three years in a smaller, provincial congregation before working in a larger urban church.

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Feature

Angels dancing on the nose of a bus

Michael R. Geisterfer

It happened on a dusty mountain road in the northern Dominican Republic. I was driving an old school bus that was so dilapidated that in North America it would have been condemned to the scrapyard. But in the D.R. it was heaven-sent. A few pieces of wire to keep the bumper on, a bit of twine around the muffler to keep it from rattling off, and we had ourselves a "prayer mobile" capable of transporting 50 North American doctors and nurses around the island on a medical mission of mercy.

I had been commandeered to chauffeur this entourage into tiny Haitian *bateyes* in the outlying areas because I was the only one with a bus driver's license. But not even a pilot's license would have been enough to keep that vehicle out of harm's way.

We were in the mountains. One of the tricks I had learned to get up the steep, winding passes was to disengage the transmission going down the mountain so that we gained as much speed as possible. I would re-engage the transmission on the upswing and the momentum would usually take the old bus over the top.

A flawed strategy

The flaw in this strategy was that the bus really had no functional breaks. The only way to effectively stop was to downshift all the way to first gear and allow its weight to grind it to a halt, a tactic that doesn't work too well going downhill.

On this particular occasion we were just at maximum speed screaming down the mountain when I saw an old pickup truck pull out of a sideroad at the bottom. At first I thought I could simply pass it on the left. It was going so slow, at my speed we would simply whiz by it. Then I saw another vehicle moving uphill toward us. Passing would result in a head-on collision.

By this time it was clear to me that a collision was inevitable. Though no sound escaped my lips, inside I was screaming for help. I decided to plow into the rear-end of the truck in front of us; fewer lives would be lost than in a head-on collision. I braced myself for impact.

An unearthly cushion

Then it happened. We were about 10 feet from the truck, careening wildly towards its rear bumpers, when suddenly it seemed we hit an invisible cushion. At 10 feet, the distance between us and the other truck remained inexplicably constant.

We didn't get any closer to the truck, even though our speed had not decreased in the slightest. In fact, it was as if this "cushion" between us and the truck was actually pushing the truck ahead. This continued until we started going up the next mountain slope and I was finally able to downshift and bring the bus to a trembling halt.

I was, of course, stunned, as were the doctors behind me. No one said a word, but we were all thinking the same thing. Something had intervened to prevent a horrible accident. The only thing I could think of was that our guardian angels had placed themselves between the vehicles and absorbed the impact.

This is, of course, conjecture and has no basis in "scientific fact." Nevertheless, in my heart I believe it was the work of angels. Fifteen years ago, when this incident occurred, I doubt I would have articulated it as brazenly as I do now. It would not have been the thing to say, even in Christian circles. Angels existed, but weren't they stuffy and inaccessible beings only manifested in biblical times?

Today all of that has changed. Angels have captured a level of public intrigue virtually unprecedented since the Middle Ages. Not only have they become popular, they have permeated all strata of mainstream consciousness. They're in movies, in books, even in TV commercials. And the thing is, you don't even have to be Christian to believe in them. You can be an avowed atheist or a Buddhist monk, a New Age high priestess or a born-again vegan. It matters little. What matters is that either you or someone else you know has had an encounter with these miraculous beings.

So what's going on? Why this sudden interest in angels? If the recent stunning popularity of the New Age thriller *The Celestine Prophecy* is any indication, North Americans are in the grips of an immense spiritual thirst, one that mainstream Christianity seems unable to quench.

When James Redman's tale of a spiritual quest for an ancient manuscript was first released, publishers across the continent were scratching their heads in bewilderment, wondering how such a poorly written novel could become a runaway bestseller. The answer is very simple: give a parched soul even the semblance of something spiritual, and it will drink greedily, even if ultimately that something doesn't satisfy.

God, Jesus are 'out'

The same may be true of the angel phenomenon. There is no doubt validity to many of the claims in recent years about encounters with celestial beings, yet it is curious that these should so capture the public imagination. Not even God is as popular in mainstream circles as his winged servants. Certainly Jesus isn't. It is far easier on the social circuit to discuss an encounter with an angel that it is to discuss one's relationship with Jesus.

The reason for this may, again, be quite simple. Neither God nor Jesus are palatable any longer to the changing consciousness of the modern North American adult. According to Rev. Alan Stewart of the Westview Presbyterian Church in Toronto, "the theology of atonement" in mainstream Christianity depicts God as "an abusive father" intent upon avenging the sins of his children. Stewart says angels fill a void left by a God that is no longer believable. Far easier to believe in the existence of benevolent and helpful deities than in a vengeful and wrath-filled God.

Yet do they have a validity in their own right? Indeed they do, says Catholic writer and journalist, Pierre Javonovic.

Fascinated by the plethora of stories emanating from the clinical notes of surgeons and physicians on patients who, having been pronounced clinically dead, have come back with stories of "beings of light" encountered in the after-life, Javanovic set out to document as many of these startling accounts as possible. The result is *An Inquiry into the Existence of Guardian Angels.*

From light to Light

In story after story angels are described as beings composed of an indescribable light, exuding powerful, life-affirming energy and a profound sense of acceptance. In some instances they are like old friends and are often quite distinct personalities. And believing in them is not necessarily a prerequisite for encountering them.

One woman, an atheist, describes her initial encounter with these celestial beings in a somewhat humorous light: "When I reached the end (of the tunnel), I met three Beings of Light. 'O.K., I'm dead, where are the Angels?' I said to myself. They answered me by thought: 'For you, we don't have to look like Angels because you don't believe in Angels.'" They then accompanied her into the presence of an even greater light.

Indeed, this seems to be a common theme in all of the accounts. Angels are there to accompany the deceased person through a tunnel towards a great white light, described by one person as "appearing... dazzling. There is no way to describe it. I saw no figure, yet I was conscious of a person. Suddenly I knew that the light was Jesus, the person was Jesus. The light was all about me. Every part of me was absorbing the light. I felt bathed by the rays of a powerful, penetrating, loving energy."

Science doesn't have the answers

So what does all of this mean? Are these the accounts of endorphin-crazed lunatics, or factual stories of encounters with angels?

There is really no way of telling. Science has not managed to penetrate the ephemeral world with either its methodology or its sophisticated investigative tools. It can certainly shed no light on the existence of angels, and since they cannot be proved, they must be diminished, right?

On the other hand, science would be equally hard-pressed to explain why I wasn't killed on that runaway bus in the Dominican Republic 15 years ago. All the laws of physics pointed to a certain death for me, and yet here I am, fully alive.

It is ironic that science can no more explain my existence than that of angels. Yet for me, the answer is clear, either way.

If my eyes could have seen what my heart felt that day, I would have seen 50 guardian angels perched on the nose of that bus, gleefully warding off what in earthly terms would have been a disaster of the first order.

For them, of course, it would simply have been business as usual.

Michael Geisterfer is a writer living in Quebec. His guardian angel told him that defensive driving is still the preferable option.

Feature

A special disciple near the Galilean Lake

Overlooking the Sea of Galilee. In the foreground a cove where people could have sat listening to Jesus speaking to them from a boat.

Jacoba Bos

The highlight of the past year for my husband and me was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. We, along with a small group of fellow Christians, visited Israel. This trip (which has aptly been called a pilgrimage) left us with many impressions, beautiful memories and a new appreciation for the special people who proudly call this small and fiercely independent country home.

Among the many memories is one that stands out: our visit to a quiet mountainside by the Sea of Galilee. It is the place where Jesus stood, with his disciples, surrounded by the poor and sick, by some curious spectators and by law-abiding Pharasees, these last ready to snare the Teacher with a trick question.

Feeling 'beatified'

As we sat on the hillside overlooking the lake, we reflected on the words Jesus spoke to the crowds. The same words which nearly 2,000 years later still inspire millions of people who seek to live up to Christ's guidelines which begin with the encouraging words: "Blessed are you...."

We felt keenly aware of our shortcomings, yet we felt very much blessed as we listened to the familiar words of the Beatitudes (read to us by Pastor Jack, our group leader). Standing by the water's edge in casual attire with his ever-present guitar draped around his shoulder, he formed a clear image of a present-day evangelist, eager to joyfully share the good news of salvation.

After this outdoor service was concluded with prayer, we walked up the moutainside and entered the nearby church. While we were admiring the unusual architecture of this tall, circular building and its beautiful wall paintings which point to Christ's redeeming sacrifice and glorious resurrection, someone in our group suggested that we sing in this acoustically magnificent building.

We quickly found our song sheets, formed a circle and tuned our various untrained voices to Pastor Jack's guitar. We began quietly, but soon found ourselves touched by the inspiring words of the chorus "Thou art worthy."

Hushed recognition

We left the church full of reverance and wonder, as if we had caught a glimpse of heaven's glory.

While walking to our next point of interest, a young woman came running behind us. "I just wanted to tell you," she said breathlessly as she tapped one of our group on the shoulder, "The Pastor heard you singing and he really enjoyed it. And so did I," she added softly as tears filled her eyes.

Then her face brightened. "You're Christians, aren't you?" Her voice became a whisper but her face shone as she said, "So am I, but please," she pleaded in a hushed tone, "please, don't tell anybody or I'll lose my job and my friends will hate me. Your tour guide is a good friend of mine," she continued, "and I'm praying for her to become a Christian too. Would you pray for her too?" she asked earnestly. Then she disappeared as quickly as she had come.

> "Whenever I read the Beatitudes I see this young woman who urged us to pray for her Jewish friend who was not saved."

Later that day, when the sun was setting in golden splendor over the glasslike surface of the lake, we saw the stealthy Christian again, standing in the midst of a group of tourists who listened intently as she told them the story of the miraculous feeding of thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. She smiled in recognition and continued her discourse.

A secret Christian

"I'd like to have your picture," one of the women in our group said to this new-found sister in Christ, after the cluster of tourists surrounding her had left in search of souvenirs and washrooms. "And your name," my tour mate added, "so I can pray for you."

Hesitantly, the Jewish Christian agreed to pose for the camera of her new-found prayer partner from Canada and carefully printed only her first name in the friend's notebook. The fear of being discovered prevented her from becoming excited about her faith, but she did share her story with her new-found friend.

"I've been a secret Christian for a few years," she said quietly. "My best friend found the Lord when she lived in another country," she continued while her big brown eyes scanned the surrounding hillside to ensure that no enemies of the gospel were listening in on the conversation.

"When she wrote me about becoming a Christian, I was so upset I immediately booked a flight to go and see her. But when I tried to convince my friend that she was wrong in acknowledging Jesus as her Savior, God took hold of me and I became a Christian myself!

A smile spread across her face as she hugged her prayer partner. Later she waved goodbye to us.

We didn't see her again, this special disciple whose full name is unknown to us. But whenever I read the Beatitudes or see a picture of the mountain where it all took place, I see this young woman who urged us to pray for her Jewish friend who was not saved. I see her intelligent face clouded by the fear of being shunned by family and friends, and the fear of losing her job because she chose to follow the One about whom the Bible said, "He came to his own but his own did not receive him."

Jacoba Bos is a freelance writer who lives in Strathroy, Ont.

Theology

Two versions of the virgins

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANNE DE VRIES

Buckingham believes the five virgins who ran out of oil are representatives of Christians who lose their salvation.

Nannette Serra

I've recently heard two versions of the Parable of the Ten Virgins and both have set my teeth on edge.

The first version I heard several weeks ago at our neighborhood Bible study. We have been studying Jamie Buckingham's series "The Parables of Jesus."

Buckingham believes the five virgins "who ran out of oil" are representatives of Christians who lose their salvation. I wasn't really surprised to learn Buckingham does not teach "once saved, always saved." What surprised me was he went so far as to teach "once lost, always lost."

By adding Hebrews 6:4-6 ("It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened... if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance..."), Buckingham concluded that a Christian can not only lose his or her salvation but, if he or she loses it, it can never be regained.

If it is possible

I was glad it was my turn to answer when our study group came to Hebrews 6:4-6. "Buckingham is right!" I said emphatically. "If you can lose your salvation, these verses make it absolutely clear that you can't gain it back."

Several women gasped. "You mean you don't think you can regain salvation?" the Bible study leader asked. "Definitely not," I wanted to make them think. "These verses are clear. If it is possible to lose your salvation, you can't ever get it back." Then I added, "But, of course, I don't believe a Christian can lose his or her salvation."

Revival version

As appalling as Buckingham's interpretation of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, I heard a rendition this week that certainly topped it. A friend called who had been to a "Feast of Fire" conference and excitedly related John Kilpatrick's version of The Virgins. (If not familiar with the "Feast of Fire," substitute "Toronto Blessing" or the 1948 "Latter Day Rain" and come up with the same "revival" phenomena.)

After relating how she had arrived at the meeting early in the afternoon so as to get a parking space and how they had sung for two straight hours until about 9 p.m. and were at the church until midnight (she had to leave early), my friend started reading her notes. She didn't get far. The first thing related was Kilpatrick's story of the Ten Virgins.

Unfortunately, I reacted with shock and questioned her as to whether or not she might have been in an altered state of consciousness (ASC) when she heard and received this new revelation. Naturally, she clammed up an didn't relay any more information. I decided I'd better document her story before gritting the remaining enamel off my teeth.

A friend of a friend got a video of Kilpatrick's sermon and I watched it last night. It was exactly what my ASC friend had told me.

Body yes, Bride no

Kilpatrick is teaching that all ten young women are saved because they are all virgins, they all have lamps, they all go to sleep and they all hear the voice of the Bridegroom when he comes. My friend and I assume Kilpatrick means all ten virgins are going to Heaven.

According to Kilpatrick, "God" has revealed to him that "not everyone who makes up the Body of Christ on earth makes up the Bride of Christ."

Kilpatrick is as shocked as we are at this new revelation. He has to repeat it for us. "Not everyone who makes up the *Body* of Christ, makes up the *Bride* of Christ." All ten virgins are saved but only the five good virgins get to attend the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Lest we think the new revelation God has given him can't be backed up with other Scripture, Kilpatrick gives us a proof text. People come to Jesus and they say, "Lord, Lord, have we not cast out devils in your name" — it turns out these people are saved as well. Kilpatrick knows they are saved because they call Jesus "Lord" and we all know that no man can call Jesus "Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

Partial salvation

A problem immediately comes to mind with Kilpatrick's abuse of this Scripture. If these men are saved, what did Jesus mean when he said, "Depart from me, I *never* knew you"? Kilpatrick explains what Jesus really meant to say was "I never did approve of what you were doing."

I hate to come to the "Feast of Fire" with a bucket of water, but weren't the iniquities of *all* Christians laid on Jesus? (Isa. 53:6). Didn't Jesus clothe *all* of us in his robes of righteousness? (Isa. 61:10). Have we not *all* been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all? (Heb. 10:10).

Then how is it that Kilpatrick could actually convince a sincere Christian like my friend (and thousands more like her) that there is going to be a division in the Body of Christ? According to Kilpatrick's version of the virgins, the naughty Christians who forgot their oil are going to have to be punished.

Apparently God is going to send some of us to bed without supper.

Nannette Worrell Serra is a freelance writer/photographer from St. Louis, Miss.

Opinion

The secular monopoly in degree-granting remains intact

Harry Fernhout

The report of Ontario's Advisory Panel on Future Directions for Post-secondary Education, released in mid-December, recommends that Ontario policy permit, "under strict conditions, the establishment of privately financed, not-for-profit universities with the authority to grant degrees with a secular name" (Recommendation 18). The report, entitled "Excellence, Accessibility, Responsibility," is adamant that such universities must be *secular* in nature, offering a broad range of programs "in the core Arts and Science disciplines, except theology" (p.58).

Beyond simply saying "we believe," the panel provides no argument for its judgment that the degree-granting authority of "denominational colleges" must be restricted.

Meanwhile the report notes that two "denominational colleges" asked the panel for the right to offer "degrees with titles that secular institutions use" (p.12).

From the context it is clear that these "denominational colleges" are Redeemer College and the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS). "We believe," says the panel that "denominational college" programs "should continue to carry theological, religious or restricted degree designations, unless such colleges affiliate with a university" (p.57).

It is a well-known fact that one member of the advisory panel, former Education Minister Bette Stephenson, is actively involved in a movement to establish a (secular) privately funded university in the York region of Toronto.

Acting on faith

The fact that the panel's report gives thumbs up to the kind of institution Stephenson wants while rejecting, for example, the well-argued case presented by Redeemer College, certainly smells of conflict of interest. Just as distasteful is the fact that, in outlining the "strict conditions" which a "privately funded" university must meet, the panel borrows heavily from Redeemer's submission while rejecting that institution's request to be tested by these very criteria.

Beyond simply saying "we believe," the panel provides no argument for its judgment that the degree-granting authority of "denominational colleges" must be restricted. Apparently the panel considers the reasons to be so obvious that no elaboration is needed. This absence of argument is a clue that here we are close to the heart of the panel's educational ideology; their position is simply stated as a belief — a (secular) article of faith.

Further, the panel's insistence that these degree-granting restrictions be maintained is significantly out of step with the main thrust of the report. Elsewhere, "Excellence, Accessibility, Responsibility" speaks eloquent of the need for less regulation, more competition and greater differentiation in post-secondary education. Clearly these free-enterprise themes inspire the panel's proposal to modify slightly the "monopoly" (p.56) the "publicly-assisted" universities enjoy with respect to the label "university" and the granting of regular degrees. But this modification is limited to secular institutions; the secular monopoly remains intact with regard to the degree-granting issue. This represents a major blind spot in the panel's free-enterprise ideology.

Not denominational

Neither Redeemer College nor ICS, of course, rest comfortably with the "denominational college" label. Both were at pains to explain to the panel that, like the "publicly assisted" institutions, they offer undergraduate and graduate university-type education, but from a Christian life perspective. Both stressed that they are not controlled by a particular denomination.

So what does the panel mean by "denominational college"? An appendix to the report dealing with the history of higher education in Ontario provides some clarity. In the first half of the 19th century several denominations (Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic) founded colleges in Ontario, primarily for training clergy and teachers. All these institutions claimed support from the public purse. In the late 1800s it was decided that only colleges federated with a university would be funded. Over time, most of these colleges adopted the secular identity of the university. The last denominational institution to go through this transition was Waterloo Lutheran, which became Wilfrid Laurier University in the 1960s.

The appendix implies that history reveals a perfect, clean-cut solution to the divisive problem of denominational colleges. The members of the advisory panel agree; they note that it has been Ontario policy, for decades, to have "an exclusive public" post-secondary system (p.56). Here "public" means, among other things, secular. The panel wants to keep it that way.

Biased version of history

In actuality, post-secondary education in Ontario is not neat and clean when it comes to "denominational" issues. Consider the University of Toronto. Within its bosom is the Toronto School of Theology (TST), made up of a number of truly denominational schools. These enjoy the benefits of operational grants from the public purse, and have the ability to set confessional criteria in faculty hiring. TST schools offer theological (i.e., restricted) degrees which carry the name of the university. In other words, the secular U of T grants "religious" degrees in co-operation with seminaries. And, in a complete reversal of policy, for certain programs TST schools can offer regular (what the government calls "secular") degrees such as the MA and PhD through St. Michael's College (a religious institution) *without* the direct participation of the university!

Elsewhere in the province the situation is also murkier than the report suggests. The College Dominican in Ottawa has a clear religious identity but has authority to grant "secular" degrees. At a minimum one would expect the advisory panel to take these situations into account and to provide a less sanitized and biased version of history.

A matter of space

No doubt these situations reflect creative solutions to specific problems in specific circumstances. And creative solutions to solve specific problems still occur in higher education in Ontario. For example, although it has been official policy since 1963 not to allow additional publicly assisted universities, in recent years both Ryerson in Toronto and Nipissing in North Bay have been elevated to university status. The point is that even rigid policy must be adaptable to change, and to new or persistent social needs.

HARTILL ART ASSOCIATES

"The secular U of T grants 'religious' degrees in co-operation with seminaries."

System not meeting needs

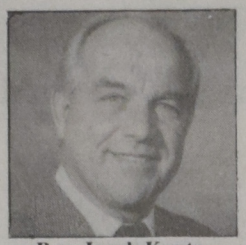
Surely the advisory panel could have perceived that the existence of Redeemer College and ICS indicate that the present monopolistic system is not meeting what a significant segment of the Ontario population regards as a very important need. The thousands of Ontarians who support these institutions would not spend many millions of dollars to maintain these institutions if they could get what they wanted for free in the publicly assisted system.

Redeemer College and ICS did not ask the advisory panel for much. In Redeemer's case, operational funding was not even an issue. These two institutions simply want space to participate in academic life in Ontario, and to grant degrees appropriate to the programs they offer. They asked the advisory panel and government to acknowledge that higher education in Ontario is not, and ought not to be, unilaterally secular. And they asked for a fair chance to contribute their unique perspective to higher education in Ontario.

At this point Ontario citizens who want to see the secular monopoly broken and who want to see greater freedom in post-secondary education must hope that the Minister of Education and Training will be wiser than his advisory panel in these matters. Such citizens must call on the minister to reject a degree-granting policy which serves only the interests of the publicly assisted universities and secular privately funded ones. They must urge the minister to pay close attention to another emphatic theme in the panel's report: the need for a policy which encourages "the emergence of *differentiation and strengths* [italics mine] among colleges and universities in order that the multiple purpose of the post-secondary education sector can best be attained" (p.3).

Harry Fernhout is president of the Institute for Christian Studies, a non-denominational, privately funded graduate school of philosophy in Toronto.

Church press quotes



Rev. Jacob Kuntz

What Sally Ann believes

Many Christians have a warm heart for the Salvation Army. The wonderful work it does, often among the lowest of the low, and the love and care it gives to so many who have no helper, is appreciated and admired by millions. But what do Salvationists believe?

In the* War Cry *of Feb. 15 their doctrines are listed:

"The Salvationist believes:

1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

2. That there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect — the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

3. That there are three persons in the Godhead — the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

4. That in the person of Jesus Christ the divine and human natures are united so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

5. That our first parents were created in a state of innocence but, by their disobedience, they lost their purity and happiness; and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

6. That the Lord Jesus Christ has, by his suffering and death, made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will, may be saved.

7. That repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.

8. That we are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

9. That continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

10. That it is the privilege of all believers to be "wholly sanctified and that their "whole spirit and soul and body" may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. In the immortality of the soul, in the resurrection of the body, in the general judgment at the end of the world, in the eternal happiness of the righteous and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

Clergy benefits in doubt

It is common knowledge that members of the clergy receive a tax break for housing expenses. However, today there are clergy couples who make a double claim for the house in which they both live. Revenue Canada objects to that and has re-assessed some of these couples (in one case, up to $20,000, plus interest). An editorial in the* Anglican Journal *(Feb. '97) deals with the possible consequences for clergy in general.

"As reported elsewhere in this edition, some local Revenue Canada offices have re-assessed some United Church clergy couples and are claiming they owe substantial back taxes, the result of both clergy claiming what is called the clergyman's residence allowance on the same house.

"If upheld and applied across the country, it could affect 37 Anglican clergy couples and may, as a result, affect a number of churches.

"The bottom line is that if Revenue Canada denies the deduction, affected clergy will likely look for more money from the parishes....

"For some years now, clergy have been permitted to deduct the fair rental value of their rectory or a cash housing allowance from their own income tax. This has allowed them to receive an otherwise taxable benefit on the grounds that their pay has been relatively low and the cost to taxpayers is outweighed by the benefit organized religion provides in society.

"Times change. Just as the church has been saying for some time that not only ordained people are called to their work, that everyone is called to his or her profession or trade, so clergy are increasingly seeing themselves not just as called to serve God in whatever ministry the bishop has in mind but as trained professionals, like physicians and lawyers. The upshot of all this is a move towards paying clergy salaries, not stipends, and a general feeling — bolstered by the local Revenue Canada ruling on clergy couples' housing allowances — that the government is probably going to move slowly but inexorably towards eliminating clergy tax breaks altogether.

"Good arguments can be made on both side of the tax question as on paying clergy salaries. The bottom line for parishioners is that churches may well find themselves in 10 or 20 years having to pay substantially more for their clergy. And that could push many parishes living on the edge right over the cliff."

Sheldon Kennedy

Not only the world of sports was shocked when Sheldon Kennedy, the 27-year-old hockey player, revealed what his former coach had done to him since he was 14. He had been sexually abused for more than six years. Doug Koop (*ChristianWeek, *Jan. 21) made the following remarks:

"The good news is that we are still shocked when revelations of this sort occur. I pray that we do not become hardened to the cries of these victims as we learn of more instances of abuse in the weeks, months and years to come [Maple Leaf Gardens for instance].

"Certainly we will be hearing from the world of sport, and I don't for a minute believe that the church has been purged of its predators just yet. People we trust with our children may seek to use them for unholy purposes; institutions we entrust with our money and prayers may choose to cover up the transgressions rather than deal with them openly and honestly.

"These perverse actions will not just be committed by frustrated celibates or televangelists, but by preachers in Christian churches, teachers in Christian denominations and mission agencies will be tempted to deal covertly and incompletely with the issues, so as not to sully their own good reputations.

"That will be sad, for the true church knows that confession and repentance are stepping stones to grace, the pathway to forgiveness and healing. The true church knows that our ability to maintain positive public relations is less important to God than our ability to deal redemptively with sin and its aftermath.

"Sheldon Kennedy did a good thing when he ripped the cover off hockey's dirty little secret. But he tore a strip off his own soul as well. Not only will he continue to bear the trauma of abuse, now he must also carry the burden of his confession. I pray that he will find a deep and abiding spiritual healing to help him overcome the sorrow in his soul. I pray that his willingness to face the public will mean that others may be spared this horrible experience.

"Beyond that, I pray that Christians would take courage from this example and demonstrate the kind of faith that is not afraid 'to be laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account,' the God who longs to forgive."

Simpler lifestyles?

"Simple living" is the main subject in the* Mennonite Brethren Herald *of Jan. 10. Jim Coggins devotes an editorial to it. He says: "An increasing number of North Americans, it seems, are choosing to simplify their lifestyles and trade in large salaries for more leisure time." He can appreciate this trend, but he also notices problems that make him hesitant to applaud .

"However, three factors cause me to have some hesitation about the trend to simple living. The first is that the individuals who are choosing to move to "a simpler life in the country" are mainly well-educated and well-off. They have capital that they can live off, if necessary; they have the money and skill to start their own businesses, and they work in the 'information industries' that allow them to work out of their homes. Moreover, many of them are making money 'selling' the simple lifestyle to other city-dwellers. Moreover, these people remind me of entrepreneurs in the late Middle Ages, who tended to get rich, buy a title and move to a country estate. It's a form of early retirement available only to the wealthy.

"Second, we Christians agree that it is wrong to worship money and that there is 'a greater purpose in life.' However, while I see a movement *away* from money, I see no evidence that the trend is moving toward a worship of the true God. Rather, the movement seems to have switched its worship from the god of money to the god of simple lifestyle.

"Third, I am not convinced that the trend is less selfish or self-centred than the worship of money was. One of those cashing out observed, 'What it is about is control and freedom.' That is hardly altruism.

"I think God approves of wealth — He created material blessings for our benefit. I think God also would prefer that we live simpler lifestyles. I know he does not want us to worship (find our meaning in) money or a particular lifestyle. I also know he wants us to have lifestyles focussed on worshipping him and loving other people."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Brampton, Ont., where he works half-time as a chaplain in Holland Chr. Homes.

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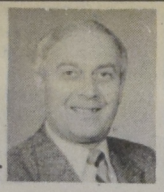
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ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

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Anniversaries

1957 March 22 1997

"Commit your ways to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act" (Ps.37:5).

With joy and thanks to the Lord, we celebrate with our parents and grandparents God's abiding faithfulness to them on their 40th wedding anniversary.

CEES and WILMA BOSMA
(nee ALTENA)

Alvin & Elsie Bosma — Caledonia, Ont.
Elaine, Brian, Darryl, Andrew
Bob & Renee Bosma — St. Catharines, Ont.
Cory
Marlene & Simon Elzinga — Caledonia, Ont.
Stephen, Philip, Catherine, Bradley
Sid & Frances Bosma — Caledonia, Ont.
Michael

Open house to be held, D.V., on Saturday, March 22, 1997, from 1:30 - 4:00 p.m., at the Mt. Hamilton Chr. Ref. Church, 1411 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton, Ont.

Home address: 65 Lister Avenue, Hamilton, ON L9B 1E1

Aalten, the Neth. Picton, Ont.
1952 March 14 1997

With much joy and thankfulness to our Lord, we celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

JOHN and RETA HEINEN
(nee WESTERVELT)

Our prayer is that God will continue to bless the two of you with health and happiness in the years to come.

With love from your children:

Alida & Cecil Mosselman — Hamilton, Ont.
Scott, LeeAnne, Jennifer
Eric & Elsie Heinen — Grimsby, Ont.
Michael, Paul, Wayne, Glenn
Diane & Bernard Prinzen — Bloomfield, Ont.
David & Angela, Philip, Stephen, Rachel
Geraldine & Henry Nyman — Waterdown, Ont.
Mark, Craig, Trevor
Nancy & Warren Lee — Burlington, Ont.
Michael, Melissa

Home address: R.R. #1, Picton, ON K0K 2T0

Teachers

CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.: Immanuel Chr. School invites applications for a **possible teaching Principal position** for a 1-9 grade school with approximately 60 students. Please send inquiries and or resumes to:

Hans Hovingh
R.R. #2
Cornwall, PE C0A 1H0
Phone (902) 566-4565

Anniversaries

1957 March 21 1997

"I will lift up my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth" (Ps.121:1,2).

It is with praise and thanksgiving to God we are able to celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

LOUIS and JOANNE LISE
(nee HANIA)

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless and uphold you in the years to come.

With much love from your children and grandchildren:

Wilbert & Margareth Lise — Woodbridge, Ont.
Angela, Richard, Patrick, Geoffrey
Jim & Sylvia Parish — Blyth, Ont.
Corey, Joanne, David, Jaimie
John & Sandra Benjamins — Blyth, Ont.
Michael, Ryan, Laura, Brittany, Katelyn, Trevor
Charles & Sophie Lise — Listowel, Ont.

Friends and relatives are invited to celebrate with us at an open house in the Chr. Ref. Church in Listowel, Ont., D.V., on Saturday, March 29, 1997, from 2-4 p.m.

Home address: R.R. #1, Listowel, ON N4W 3G6

40th Anniversary
March 29

GEORGE and JOANNE VAN GYSSEL
(VAN NIEUWKERK)

"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations" (Ps.100:5).

Children and grandchildren:

Janet & Norman Noordhof
Joanna, April, Wendell, Heather, Geoffrey
Barbara & Rod VenHuis
Amberly, Brent, Brianna, Daniel
Hilda & Art Dykstra
Camille, Caryn, James, Courtenay, Marsha
John & Dana Van Gyssel
Justine, Blair
Cora & Pete Hoekstra
David, Michelle, Stephanie, Diana

Open house at Sonrise Chr. Ref. Church (1/2 mile south of Alberta Hospital), from 2-4 p.m., on Saturday, April 19, 1997.

Dad and Mom, we love you and thank God for you. Congratulations!

For Rent

For rent: Three bedroom cottage in scenic Holten, the Neth.
Contact: A Borger at
(905) 623-6049

APARTMENTS: Redeemer College has **2- and 4-bedroom, furnished apartments available.** Can be rented daily, weekly or monthly at reasonable rates. No lease required. Please call **(905) 648-2131, ext. 260 or 290.**

Obituaries

Hollandseveld, Dr. Ladner, B.C.
Aug. 23, 1924 - Feb. 6, 1997

LAMMY BOOY
(SCHONEWILLE)

passed away peacefully on Feb. 6, 1997, in the Delta Hospital, surrounded by her loving family and in the hope of resurrection (John 11:23-25). In a similar way as Rebecca (Gen. 24:57), Lammy,after about three dates, answered my prayers "I go with you." A year later she fulfilled that promise and she became my bride for 48 years and seven months. No husband can receive a greater blessing than to receive a woman, with such a great faith, love, care, and service to others, and to her Lord and Master. In the memorial service, she was compared to Rebecca, Martha and Mary.

"Time will never erase the way in which you touched our hearts."

Her husband John Booy — Delta, B.C.
Niesje Drummond (Bill) — Port Coquitlam, B.C.
Henry & Brenda — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Gary & Karen — Matsqui, B.C.
grandchildren Joshua and Angela.
Mother-in-law Patricia Booy, Aylmer, Ont., two sisters, Jantje and Trui, and five brothers, Jan, Bart, Henk, Herman and Jaap, in the Netherlands.

Correspondence address:
John Booy, #103-4984-48th Ave., Delta, BC V4K 1V7

On Feb. 19, 1997, our dearly loved son and brother

KELVIN ROGER DYKEMA

was called home by our Lord, after a valiant seven month battle with cancer.

He was 40 years old.

During his illness he found much comfort and strength in the words of Psalm 27.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Joanne and children Nathan, Meaghan, Stefan, Jordan and Tayah.

His burial took place on Feb. 22, at the Garden of Peace Cemetery, Calgary, Alta., followed by a praise service at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Calgary, Alta., where we celebrated his life, Pastor Mike Reitsma officiating.

Simon & Beatrice Dykema — Beamsville, Ont.
Helen & Simon VanTol — Orillia, Ont.
Elsa & Michel Moreau — St. Romvald, Que.
Kathleen & Kirill Richine (fiance) — Terrace, B.C./Edmonton, Alta.

Correspondence address:
Simon and Beatrice Dykema,
4965 Drake Ave., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B5

Roommate Wanted

Looking for roommate to share brandnew home in **Beamsville, Ont.,** immediately off QEW.
Phone (905) 563-8402 or
(905) 563-8961

Obituaries

The council and the congregation of Riverside Chr. Ref. Church, Wellandport, Ont., extend their Christian love and sympathy to Hennie, the children, and the family of fellow office-bearer

JACK HEIDA

whom the Lord took into his eternal rest on Tuesday, March 4, 1997. May the love of God and his promises, comfort and sustain you in this time of sorrow.

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23).

White Rock, B.C., Canada

ADRIANUS 'ADRIAN' PIETER VAN VLIET

passed away peacefully on Feb. 8, 1997, in his 94th year.

Born in Rotterdam, the Neth.

Predeceased by his wife of over 66 years, Geertruida 'Trudy' Van Vliet-Van Duren, on Sept. 29, 1996, and by an infant daughter.

Adrian is survived by his loving family:

Pieter (Ann) Van Vliet — Regina, Sask.
Sepkje (Loyd) Lind — Kamloops, B.C.
Louisa (Guenter) Bormann — Winnipeg, Man.
Adrian (Elizabeth) Van Vliet — Cumberland, B.C.
Trudy (Bernie) Van Der Ziel — Regina, Sask.
Beatrix (Martin) Ploegman — Vernon, B.C.
Irene (John) Stronks — Calgary, Alta.
Margriet (Wiebe) Van Camp — Burns Lake, B.C.
John (Ann) Van Vliet — Victoria, B.C.

26 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Save in Jesus' arms, rest well, good and faithful father.

Correspondence address:
Mrs. Irene S. Stronks, 53 Farnham Dr. SE, Calgary, AB

Miscellaneous

Looking to buy a chicken farm (layers or broilers). We would require training. Would also be interested in owner holding part or all of the mortgage. Preferred location would be **Manitoba or Ontario.** Please send letters to **File #2662, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Personal

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Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Classifieds

Obituaries

Leiden, the Neth. Sarnia, Ont.
May 24, 1913 - Feb. 23, 1997

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust" (Ps.91:1,2).

At Vision Nursing Home, on Sunday, Feb. 23, 1997,

JANNETJE (JEANETTE) HENDRIKA ZYLSTRA (nee SEKERIS)

went home to be with her Lord in her 84th year.

She was the beloved wife of the late Cornelis Zylstra (1974).

Sadly missed by her children:
Auke (Mike) & Johanna Zylstra
Gerda & Bob Jonkman
and the grandchildren Andrea & Jeroen, Dan & Gwyneth, Robert & Angela, James & Gillian, Janice

The funeral was held in Second Chr. Ref. Church, Sarnia, Ont., Rev. J. Jongsma and Rev. A. DeJager officiating.

Correspondence addresses:
Mike Zylstra, 860 Cathcart Blvd., Sarnia, ON N7V 2N8
Gerda Jonkman, 19 Penni Place, Guelph, ON N1H 7L2

Teachers

CLINTON, Ont.: Clinton and District Chr. School, currently presenting Chr. education to 234 students (grades K-8), invites applications for **openings in Grades 2 and 6**, effective September 1997. Skills in the areas of French and music and language arts would be an asset. Interested applicants should submit a letter of application, resume, college transcripts, personal philosophy of education and references to:

Clarence Bos, Principal
Clinton and Distr. Chr. School
Box 658, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0
Phone: (519) 482-7851

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School anticipates hiring another **full-time teacher for 1997/98.** This position is required as a result of growth in our Grade 10-12 school. Consider joining our caring, encouraging society, who together with an excellent staff, work to provide an education rooted in the Reformed tradition. We encourage those with experience and/or expertise in computers/business education to apply, however, we will consider all applicants who are willing and able to teach a variety of core subjects.

Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or have teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Chr. High School
22 Eagle Road
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G7
Phone: (403) 782-4535
Fax: (403) 782-5425

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, serving 377 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for the 1997-98 school year. Two junior high positions: 1) **Math/Science** and 2) **Physical Education/Language Arts and/or Social Studies.** One or more elementary positions are also anticipated. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume and letter of application to:

John Piers, Principal
Lacombe Chr. School
5206-58 Street
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: (403) 782-6531
Fax: (403) 782-5760

FAIRVIEW, Alta.: Fairview Chr. School. Two possible openings. Good **experienced teacher/principal** and a **second teacher** who feel called to help out a struggling school society, offering Grade 1 to 9. Must have enthusiasm and love for Christian education and be able to implement a vision. Grade split and salary to be determined. Please send resume with reference to:

Maryan Weenink
c/o Box 2177
Fairview, AB T0H 1L0
Phone: (403) 597-2074

FORT McMURRAY, Alta.: Fort McMurray Chr. School has a **possible opening for the 1997-98 school year.** This interdenominational C.S.I. school, in its 4th year of operation, with a current enrollment of 40 students, anticipates offering K-Gr.8. A committed Chr. teacher willing to grow with the school is desired. Please send resume to:

Tena Siebenga-Valstar
Fort McMurray Chr. School
101 Tundra Dr.
Ft. McMurray, AB T9H 5A4
Fax: (403) 790-0186
Phone: (403) 743-1079

KINGSTON, Ont.: Kingston Chr. School.

TEACHERS NEEDED

Due to increased enrollment Kingston Chr. School invites applications for two openings:
1) Grade 7 or 8
2) Grade 5 or 6
(limited rotary is expected for both positions).

Specialties in music, French, computers and special education an asset.

The successful applicants must be able to meet the requirements of KCS Society membership.

Please send all resumes by April 1, 1997, to:

Mr. H. Marcus, Principal
Kingston Chr. School
1212 Woodbine Road
Kingston, ON K7L 4V2
Phone (613) 384-9572
Fax (613) 384-9580

Teachers

LISTOWEL, Ont.: Listowel Chr. School invites teacher applications for a **part-time (40-50%) remedial/resource teacher** position beginning in September 1997. Please send resume and references to:

Listowel Chr. School
Box 151, Listowel, ON N4W 3H2
Attention: Henry Bergsma, Principal

OKANAGAN NORTH: The Vernon Chr. School, a parent operated school, is a diverse Chr. community providing education to 234 students in Kindergarten to Grade 8. The school is looking for a **Principal** for the 1997-1998 school year. In anticipation of future growth and the addition of Grade 9/10, the school is seeking the services of an **Assistant Principal** (50% teaching, 50% administration). Applications are also being accepted for possible openings in the intermediate (4-9) and primary (K-3) grades. Send resumes to:

Mr. Elco Vandergrift, Principal
6890 Pleasant Valley Road
Vernon, BC V1B 3R5

PONOKA, Alta.: Ponoka Chr. School, located in Central Alberta has **possible teaching openings in elementary and junior high.** Alberta Certification required. Application forms available.

E.C. Land, Principal
Ponoka Chr. School
6300 - 50 St.
Ponoka, AB T4J 1E6
Phone: (403) 783-6563
Fax: (403) 783-6687

ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: Beacon Chr. High School invites applications for a **possible opening in the area of English** for the 1997-98 school year. The successful applicant will have some drama background. Send resume and statement of educational philosophy to:

Ted Harris, Principal
Beacon Chr. High School
2 O'Malley Drive
St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7
Fax: (905) 937-1130

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Chr. School, a denominationally diverse community which offers Kindergarten through Grade 10, has **potential openings at several levels.** Please send your resume to:

Ron Donkersloot, Principal
Vancouver Chr. School
3496 Mons Drive
Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6
No applications by fax, please.

More teacher ads on pages 16 an 18 ...

Job Opportunities

KNOX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
located in Bowmanville, Ontario
seeks applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL
to begin August 1997.

Knox Chr. School is a dynamic, growing JK-8 school of 300 students, with 15 teachers and a total staff of 25. Expansion is planned again for next year. We are looking for an experienced principal with energy and vision to provide spiritual and educational leadership to the staff and the school community. Duties will include approximately 80 per cent administrative and 20 per cent teaching time. Application deadline is **March 20, 1997.** Please send letter of application and resume, including a statement of your vision of Christian education and leadership to:

Bill Helmus, Principal
Knox Christian School
410 Scugog Street, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2
Phone: (905) 623-5871 (school) or (905) 623-6952 (home)
Fax: (905) 623-8877

Hamilton District Christian High School

Caring Community	Effective Instruction	Growing Enrolment	Demanding Curriculum

- Teaching teen-aged minds and hearts to learn the truth about our Lord's love is an immeasurable joy.
- We pray that God will enrich our school community with a teacher gifted in the instruction of **English.**
- Preference will be given to qualified candidates who also have the ability to entice high school students to sing with joy as an expression of praise to God.

Please reply in writing to:
Hamilton District Chr. High School
Mr. Jim Vanderkooy, Principal
92 Glancaster Road, Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9
Fax: (905) 648-6655

MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Covenant Chr. Ref. Church of St. Catharines, Ont., Canada, seeks a full-time **Ministry Director.** Responsibilities include equipping members for leadership and mutual ministry, outreach in the community, youth ministry and adult education. Applicants need not be ordained; However, applicable degree or experience is required. Please send inquiries and/or resume by **April 15, 1997,** to:

Search Committee, c/o Mike Bylsma,
58 Croydon Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 1J5, Canada
or Fax (905) 935-9307.

Chemistry/Physics teacher needed

Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from **chemistry/physics specialists** who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins **August 1, 1997.** Send applications to **Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com**

Classifieds

Teachers

WINDSOR, Ont.: Maranatha Chr. Academy invites resumes for **Principal** to start September 1997. MCA is an interdenominational elementary school of 100 students. Some teaching duties will be included. Qualified individuals with a strong commitment to Christian education who can lead a growing school community should reply to the Principal Search Committee:

Maranatha Chr. Academy
939 Northwood St.
Windsor, ON N9E 2B4
or contact:
Peter Baljeu at (519) 966-7424

WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto Distr. Chr. High School invites applications for a **possible full-time English position** commencing Sept. 1997. Send applications to:

Ren Siebenga
c/o Toronto DCHS
377 Woodbridge Ave.
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8
Fax: (905) 851-9992
e-mail:
siebenga@tdch.torcon.com

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls declined:

— Rev. P. Heerema of Grace CRC, Welland, Ont., has declined the call from First CRC, Drayton, Ont.

— Waterloo, Ont., Rev. Herman Van Niejenhuis of Willowdale, Ont.

Classis meeting:

— Classis Huron will meet in regular session, D.V., on May 14, 1997, at 9:30 a.m., in the Waterloo CRC, located at 209 Bearinger Road in Waterloo, Ont. All materials for the printed agenda must be in the office of the stated clerk not later than April 7, 1997.
Hilbert Rumph, Stated Clerk.

— Classis Niagara will hold its next meeting, D.V., on Wednesday, May 21, 1997, at 9 a.m., at the Grace CRC in Welland, Ont. Items for the agenda, including requests to address Classis, should be received by the undersigned before April 4, 1997.
John TeBrake, Stated Clerk.

— Classis Chatham will meet in regular session, D.V., Tuesday, May 13, 1997, in the First Chr. Ref. Church of Sarnia, Ont. All materials for the agenda must be in the office of the stated clerk by Monday, March 31, 1997.
Jan H.G. Vandergeest, Stated Clerk.

Personal

DECEMBER 1996/JANUARY 1997

THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS:

de BAKKER, Ronald Hendrikus, born February 26, 1966 in Leidschendam.

BALAZOVICS, Nora, born August 15, 1939, last known address: Robert Street, Toronto.

BARINK, Gerhardus J., born February 25, 1932.

BEENHAKKER, Arie, born June 29, 1934 in Haarlem.

van den BERG, Johanna I.M., born April 18, 1944.

van den BERG, Martinus H.J., born August 11, 1968.

BRANDEHOF, Paul E.O., born January 29, 1969, emigrated to Canada August 12, 1992.

BRINK, Jacobus C., born June 12, 1959.

de BRUIJN, Hendrik J., born October 3, 1966.

BRUINZEEL, Michelle Denise, born March 30, 1968 in Rotterdam.

CASPERS-NEDERVELD, Maria Bertha, born December 26, 1930.

CHUNG, Thanh Phuong, born July 15, 1969 in Phan Thiet, Vietnam.

van DIEMEN, Rudolf A., born August 27, 1972 in Leiden.

van DIJCK, Antoine G.M., born April 21, 1959.

van DIJK, Albert Guido Frank, born August 30, 1954 in Hoogeveen.

EDELMAN, Natasja M., born September 30, 1968 in Eindhoven.

van EEUWIJK, Remco A.F., born May 11, 1970.

ERLICHMAN, Myrna, born

van ES, Jan Willem, born May 31, 1947 in Dubbeldam.

GHAZI, Jane Nisa Faranaas, born October 15, 1968 in Paramaribo, Surinam.

GROEN, Jacob Evert, born May 27, 1967 in The Hague.

de GROOT, Rolf H., born July 9, 1968 in Groningen.

van HOOF, Matheus, born February 28, 1932 in Helmond, emigrated to Canada March 22, 1954, last known address in Canada: RR 1, Northwood, Ontario.

de HOOP, Grietje N., born December 22, 1954

ter HORST, Johannes Albertus Wilhelmus, born January 20, 1958 in Raamsdonkveer, emigrated to Canada May 13, 1987, last known addrress in Canada: 202 Morley Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

IERLAND, J., born February 16, 1929, last known address in the Netherlands: Sumatrastraat 47, Tilburg.

Personal

JANSSEN, Clemens T.H., born September 23, 1969.

de JONG, W., born December 21, 1928, last known address in the Netherlands: Smilde B60.

JONKER, Eddy Ebel, born July 11, 1960 in Edmonton, returned to Canada March 11, 1996.

JURGENS, Herman, born June 4, 1937 in Heerlen.

KIST-van der LAAN, Kaatje, born October 25, 1945, last known address in the Netherlands: Gouda, emigrated to Canada December 19, 1988.

KLEIN, Albertus Wilhelmus Otto, born February 10, 1955 in Coevorden.

KNOLLENBURG, Bob, born August 30, 1957 in Amsterdam.

KOOMEN, Hillegonda Mathilde Joceline, born February 24, 1941 in Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada December 23, 1994.

KROP, Rudolf, born July 25, 1951.

KUIPER, Geerd, born December 31, 1923 in Groningen, last known address in Canada: 8519-94 Avenue, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

LYNER, Nathalie Suzanne, born May 19, 1969 on Curacao, Dutch Antilles.

MAKAYA, Naishadha Daryana, born October 30, 1973.

MEGENS, Jacobus Jozef Maria, born March 25, 1932 in Someren, emigrated to Canada June 26, 1953.

NAP, M., born October 17, 1965.

PAULUS, Gerda, born May 7, 1929, emigrated from Amsterdam to Canada on July 16, 1957.

PAAUWE, Eric Franklin Winston, born August 16, 1946 in Rotterdam.

RELIM, Petra, born January 25, 1973 in Lobith.

SCHILDMEIJER, Jacobus Cornelis, born December 6, 1901 in Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada April 1954.

SCHOUTEN, Koert Stefan, born July 23, 1967 in Purmerend, emigrated to Canada from 's Hertogenbosch in 1994, last known address: 71 Front Street East, Toronto.

SELHORST, Hendrikus, born February 19, 1932.

de SEVREN JACQUET, Irene Elisabeth, born January 22, 1929, emigrated to Canada July 18, 1957.

STOKKELAAR, Judith H.G.M., born January 14, 1969.

STOVIUS, Nicolaas Gerardus, born June 12, 1969 in Nieuwerkerk aan de Ijssel, emigrated to Canada October 27, 1995.

TAN, Igo Thay Gwan, born May 31, 1963 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

THOMAS, Cyan D.M., born March 7, 1974.

VERMEULEN-GAFFEN, Marion A.M., born July 29, 1966, last known address: 4980 Clanranald, Montreal, Quebec.

Personal

VERSLUIS or **VERSLUYS-VANEE** or **Van Ee**, Maatje, last known address in the Netherlands: Boterbloemlaan 11, Vlissingen, emigrated to Canada in 1949.

de VRIES, Alexandra S.T., born May 7, 1969.

WALSTOCK, Cyril Colin David, born November 10, 1970 in Leeuwarden.

WARNAAR, Peter, born October 8, 1970.

WILLEMS, Jan, born July 31, 1923.

WYDENBOSCH, Xandra Juanita, born December 2, 1956 in Paramaribo.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS
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Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous

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The Christian Labour Association of Canada invites applications from qualified persons for the position of:

ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER

The position involves hands-on accounting and bookkeeping duties, including accounts receivable and payable, payroll, banking, the preparation of budgets and financial statements, and providing input for financial management and planning.
Qualifications sought are a certificate in accounting and the ability to work in a computerized accounting environment. Experience is preferred.
The location for this position is at the address shown below. CLAC offers a competitive salary and benefit package. **April 28, 1997**, is the anticipated starting date.
Applications, including a full resume and professional and personal references, should be directed to:

Ed Grootenboer, Executive Director
Christian Labour Association of Canada
5920 Atlantic Drive, Mississauga, ON L4W 1N6
Tel.: (905) 670-7383; Fax: (905) 670-8416
The closing date for applications is March 25, 1997.

Classifieds/Events

Miscellaneous | **Miscellaneous** | **Miscellaneous**

"Let All Men Sing"

The Mattaniah Male Choir will be recording a new CD. Part of this recording consists of "Congregational" singing.

We are looking for men who like to sing. Join the 70-voice choir, with organist Andre Knevel, in singing songs of faith. Admission is free but you must register your name by calling Arie de Haan (905) 892-6391; Bert Suyker (519) 424-9037; Dick van 't Foort (519) 468-2031.
Participants will receive $5 off the price of the CD when it is released.

Date:
Saturday, April 5, 1997
Place:
Central Presb. Church
165 Charlton Ave. W. in Hamilton, Ont.
Time: 6:45 p.m.

The Living Word

Sermons for reading services.

CRC

Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
210 Clarke St. N.
Woodstock, ON N4S 7M7
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Financial Aid

Students preparing for the Ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church who hail from **Classis Toronto** are invited to apply for assistance from the Classis Student Fund. Please contact the secretary: **John Luth, 25 Davidson St., Barrie, ON L4M 3R9, (705) 734-9166.**

GARRELSWEER REUNION

Op **20 september 1997** viert de **Chr. Basisschool in GARRELSWEER** (Groningen) haar **125-jarig bestaan**, o.a. door middel van een reunie. Oud-leerlingen worden verzocht hun naam en adres te sturen naar ondergetekende. Telefoneren mag natuurlijk ook.

Tjitske van der Eide
P.O. Box 298, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0, Canada
(403) 872-2182

Nederlandse Paaszangdienst

Wij nodigen U uit voor onze Nederlandse Paaszangdienst op
Zondag, 30 maart 1997
7.30 n.m. in de
Emmanuel Ref. Church
170 Clarke Street, North
Woodstock, Ont.
Na de dienst is er gelegenheid om vrienden te ontmoeten onder het genot van koffie en thee.

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Send your questions to
Peter and Marja.
Confidentiality is assured.

Smithville District Christian High School

Due to increased enrolment, we are in need of **additional staff** for the 97/98 school year **in the area of mathematics/business.** Please direct all inquiries and send letters of applications, resumes and teaching credentials to:

Mr. M.B. Stroobosscher, Principal
6488 Smithville Road, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
(905) 957-3255 (Fax: 905-957-3431)

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Director and Counsellor at Christian Care Center
Lansing, Illinois

Workshops

April 26, 1997: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church
18 Fourth Ave., Trenton, Ont.

Registration and $20 p.p., $35 per couple (lunch incl.), required before April 12.

Phone or write:
Jane de Haan, R.R. #2, Ancaster, ON L9G 3L1
(905) 679-6490
Coffee and registration 8:30 a.m.

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

March 14-15 *Art Talks! The Ruth Memorial Series on the Arts and Culture*, a new annual series from the ICS, this year featuring international performers Marnie Giesbrecht and Joachim Segger. **March 14:** Free organ and piano concert, 8 p.m., Deer Park United Church, 129 St. Clair Ave., **Toronto**, Ont. **March 15:** Dr. Segger presents a free masters level performance lecture on "Webern Piano Variations, Opus 27: Performance and Analysis Relationships," 10 a.m., U. of T., Faculty of Music, 80 Queen's Park Cr., **Toronto**, Ont. Info.: Call ICS at (416) 979-2331.(#).

March 15 Open house in honor of Rev. J.G. Klomps' retirement, 2-4 p.m., Bible League office, 3067 Mainway Dr., **Burlington**, Ont.(#)

March 20-24 Ligonier Ministries of Canada seminars. **March 20:** 7-10 p.m., Southminster United Church, **Lethbridge**, Alta. **March 21-22:** Ligonier Conference at First Evangelical Free Church, **Calgary**, Alta. Fri.: 6:45-10 p.m. Sat.: 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. **March 24:** 1-10 p.m., Grande Prairie Alliance Church, **Grande Prairie**, Alta. Speakers include: Dr. Stephen Beck, Dr. Neal Hegeman and Dr. Ken Shoemaker (Calgary). For info. call: 1-800-563-3529 or (519) 763-0339.

March 21 Open house to mark Hank Kuntz's retirement from CLAC, 7 p.m., CLAC head office, 5920 Atlantic Dr., **Mississauga**, Ont. Info.: (905) 670-7383 (#).

March 21-22 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre group presents "Een beeld van 'n man," a 3-act comedy, 8 p.m., Dutch Canadian Club Hall, **London**, Ont. Tickets: Adrian Rodenburg (519) 283-6285 (#).

March 22 Annual concert by the Brampton/Georgetown Christian Male Choir, The Choraliers, 7:30 p.m., Second CRC, **Brampton**, Ont. Participants: Stephanie Numan (violin) and Fred Numan (organ). Info.: (905) 793-6158.

March 30 "Nederlandse Paaszangdienst," 7:30 p.m., Emmanuel Ref. Church, 170 Clarke St., N., **Woodstock**, Ont. Info.: (519) 537-6422 (#)

April 5 The Eighth Coffee Break/Story Hour Inspirational Rally, 9-4:30 p.m., Park Bible Church, **Burlington**, Ont. Registration starts 8 a.m., Theme: "Fear Not, God Upholds You." Main speaker: Betty Veldman. Info.: Ellen Hessels, (905) 457-7490.

Support Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)

Make a donation for 1997!

Reformed Faith Witness, the new publisher of *Christian Courier*, is a newly formed charitable organization which received tax exempt status and its own registration number from Revenue Canada on Nov. 20, 1996 (see story in Dec. 6, 1996, issue of *Christian Courier*).
Please consider making a financial gift early in (and for) 1997. All contributions will be used to help *Christian Courier* and the cause of Reformed Christian journalism. Send your cheque and complete the coupon below and we will issue an official receipt.

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Conferees unsettled by 'website' generation

Stacia Vong

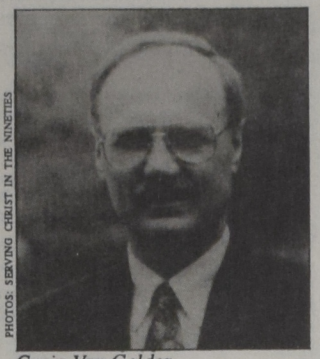
BOLTON, Ont. — The Christian Reformed Church is not growing in population but in diversity, keynote speaker Craig Van Gelder told some 30 conferees at the 1997 Serving Christ in the Nineties Conference.

The professor of domestic missiology at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich., explained the struggles of the Dutch immigrants who formed or joined the CRC, picturing them as upholding the truth while trying to preserve their identity and culture in a foreign land.

He used the categories of "immigrant survivors," "system builders" and "cultural engagers," to illustrate diversity along generational lines within the CRC.

However, participants questioned whether Van Gelder's categories applied to the Canadian branch of the CRC. Older conferees argued that his categorization may fit the American context, but does not mirror the image of the CRC in Canada. They also said that they were as involved in culture as the younger people are. There has been a strong neo-Calvinistic movement north of the Canada-US border which has engaged culture for decades.

Some of the disparities addressed by Van Gelder were



PHOTOS: SERVING CHRIST IN THE NINETIES

Craig Van Gelder

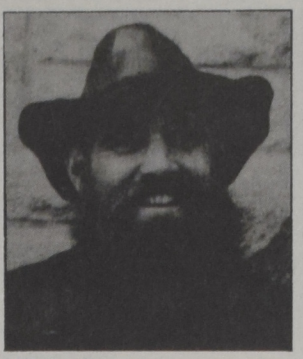
brought to life by Bill Van Groningen, a chaplain at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. He spoke about "The Challenge of Faith in a Post-Modern World," a world devoid of the language of absolutes.

He noted that today the challenge of faith occurs in the reality and power of a technological society: where we digest only small bits of information; where we sit in front of the TV with the remote control in hand switching from one image to the next; where image speaks louder than the written word; and where communication occurs on a small screen for brief periods of time.

As the computer becomes personified, we are fixated by the websites and eventually we form a community of "websiters." There is disillusionment with the old order of things such as belief, normativity, absolutes and truth. Such is the generation of life after God!

Ironically, Van Groningen explains that this generation of life after God are not unbelieving people, but are people confused by the meaning of belief and truth. To illustrate this confusion, he played clips from films and songs such as "What if God was one of us" by Joan Osbourne, "Mr. Jones" by Counting Crows, and "Nautical Disaster" by Tragically Hip. All these songs express a sense of despair and a lack of purpose, and yet at the same time cry out for meaning. We are challenged to look beneath the surface of crude images, harsh sounds, and to discover a cry for connection. There is hope in faith surviving and thriving in post-modern times. However, this hope involves the hard work of translating the stories of the gospel to a language that connects with a changing culture. Translation is the bride between the gap.

Van Groningen's presentation stirred varied responses from participants. It seemed that some older people were unsettled and bewildered by the image of the "@ generation." For some the vision was shattered, but for



Bill Van Groningen

others the vision was confirmed.

What vision?

However, through the sharing of stories, the intergenerations came to an understanding of the importance and relevance of translating the "Old Story" to our times.

Both Van Gelder and Van Groningen provided helpful reality bits to help the conferees understand the joys and struggles of post-modern times.

Conferences like this provide opportunities for the young and the old to come together in conversation. Anyone interested in helping to organize next year's event may contact Gary Miedema or Jen Bulthuis at (905) 522-8915, or via e-mail: aj538@freenet.hamilton.on.ca.

Netherlands to be 'invaded' again

Gospel outreach to hit six million homes

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. (Voice of the Martyrs) — Instead of troops and armoured vehicles, the Dutch are about to experience an invasion of a different kind. The operation is called "Actie Brievenbus '97," translated "Operation Mailbox '97."

Billed as a truly co-operative outreach venture between many of the Dutch churches, "Operation Mailbox '97" has targeted six million Dutch homes to receive a special booklet during the month of October '97. The entire distribution will be done in one day.

Originally written in English by John Blanchard as "Ultimate Questions" and published in the U.K. by Evangelical Press, copyrights have been obtained to publish the booklet in Dutch

titled, "Levensbelangrijke Vragen." The booklet deals openly and frankly with such questions as, "What's it all about?"; "Does God exist?"; "Does God speak?"; "Who is God?"; "Who am I?"; "What went wrong?"; "How serious is sin?" and many more, ending with the provocative question: "How can I be rescued?"

Ungodliness increasing

Operation Mailbox '97 is the inspired version of Warmold Houwing, no stranger to evangelism of a special kind. Warmold was a Dutch sea captain for many years and gave his life to the Lord about 10 years ago after a personal encounter with the Lord. Since then he poured his life into outreach evangelism ministering in places that only a sea captain could get access to.

Shuttling back and forth between the Netherlands and his home in Toronto, he has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to gain support from local churches and church leaders in the Netherlands. Response has been overwhelming.

Warmold says, "Ungodliness is on a daily and rapid incline in the Netherlands. The time to act is now. It's time to warn the people of the Netherlands." Prayer support is being organized so that when the booklet distribution takes place, the Christians in the Netherlands will be mobilized for prayer just prior to the distribution.

In the Netherlands, Stichting De Ondergrondse Kerk has put its full support behind the project and will facilitate the financial administration. In Canada this will be done by The Voice of The Martyrs.

The total budget for Operation Mailbox '97 is Dfl. 3,000,000 (about $2,250,000 Cdn.) and that includes organization, printing and distribution. Canadians are invited to participate via financial support and can do so by sending it to: The Voice of the Martyrs, Box 117, Port Credit, Mississauga, ON L5G 4L5; (905) 602-4832). Receipts will be issued.

News Digest

Lottery winner pays for new church

KANATA, Ont. (CP) — The pipes of the old Russian Orthodox Church in Kanata, Ont., (near Ottawa) had burst, the building was crawling with rats and the parish was broke. So parishioner Anatol Skok offered this prayer to God: "Let me win the lottery so I can build a new church." He promptly won $6 million in a lottery in February 1995.

This February, the new St. Xenia of Petersburg Russian Orthodox Church opened in Kanata — paid for by Skok's winnings. The church is modelled on the 13th century St. George's Cathedral just outside of Moscow. Hundreds of people passed through the church during a recent open house, but there was one conspicuous absence: Skok, 70, who wasn't feeling well.

Satellite tracking for elderly

TOKYO, Japan (AP) — Scientists in Japan have a high-tech response to the problem of elderly people who wander into danger: satellite tracking. A publicly funded research centre has proposed setting up a network of pocket-sized transmitters and satellite-linked substations at hospitals. Signals would be sent out every few minutes to devices carried by the elderly, and the transmitters would respond with a location signal, said an official at the Tochigi Technology Centre north of Tokyo.

Spiritual needs of dying studied

VANCOUVER — Dr. David Kuhl, a palliative care specialist at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, has won a major grant from the Project on Death in America to study and explore the spiritual concerns of dying patients. The project was started by American philanthropist George Soros to overcome what he believes is the medical community's obsession with "conquering disease and prolonging life" rather than helping people come to terms with their own deaths.

Kuhl will videotape interviews with 10 to 20 patients looking for themes in their spiritual development in the time leading up to their deaths.